The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 43, No. 8, August 2011

Carolina country

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Growing Native

ALSO INSIDE:

Sensible energy efficiency

Too good to be true

The tomato sandwich

Understanding portable generators—page 24

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Brazil Expedition Uncovers Thousands of Carats of Exquisite Natural Emeralds

Brandish a whopping 50 carats of genuine South American emeralds in a handcrafted new necklace design for ***less than $100.***

Halfway into our ambitious trek through the rain forest I had to remind myself that "Nothing good comes easy." These days it seems that every business trip to Brazil includes a sweltering hike through overgrown jungles, around cascading waterfalls and down steep rock cliffs. But our gem broker insisted it was worth the trouble. To tell you the truth, for the dazzling emeralds he delivered, I'd gladly go back to stomping through jaguar country.

Now our good fortune is your great reward. Don't miss this rare opportunity to own an impressive 50 carat strand of genuine South American emeralds for **under $100**. And for a limited time, we'll sweeten every Carnval Collection order with **$300 in Stauer Gift Coupons!***

Faced with this embarrassment of riches, our designer transformed this spectacular cache of large stones (each is over 8 carats average weight) into a stunning 50 ctw necklace of faceted emeralds set into .925 sterling silver. Each emerald is surrounded by delicate sterling silver rope work and filigree in the Bali-style. The 18" necklace dangles from a sterling silver chain that fastens with a secure double-sided shepherd's hook clasp.

What is the source of our emerald's timeless appeal?

The enchanting color of the Stauer ***Carnaval*** **Faceted Emerald Necklace** comes from nature's chemistry. Our polished and faceted, well-formed natural emeralds are immediately recognized as something special. Indeed, when we evaluated these emeralds, color was the most important quality factor. Today, scientists tell us that the human eye is more sensitive to the color green than to any other. Perhaps that is why green is so soothing to the eye, and why the color green complements every other color in your wardrobe.

Emeralds are, by weight, the most valuable gemstone in the world.

Now you can wear genuine emeralds and feel great about knowing that you were able to treat yourself to precious gems without paying a precious price. A 100+ carat emerald necklace found on Rodeo Drive or 5th Avenue could cost well over $250,000...but not from Stauer. Wear and admire the exquisite Stauer ***Carnaval*** **Faceted Emerald Necklace** for 30 days.

50 Carats of Genuine Emeralds for Under $100!

"You will rarely find an emerald necklace with 50 carats and certainly not at this price!"

— *James T. Fent, Stauer GIA Graduate Gemologist*

A. *50 ctw of genuine emeralds. Enlarged to show details.*

And, if for any reason you are not dancing the Samba with pure satisfaction after receiving your faceted emerald necklace, simply return it to us for a full refund of the purchase price. But we're confident that when you examine this stunning jewelry, you'll be reminded of the raw beauty of the Amazon rain forests mixed with the flash and dazzle of the exotic Carnaval in Rio de Janeiro. ***Call Today. This cache of genuine emeralds is extremely limited.***

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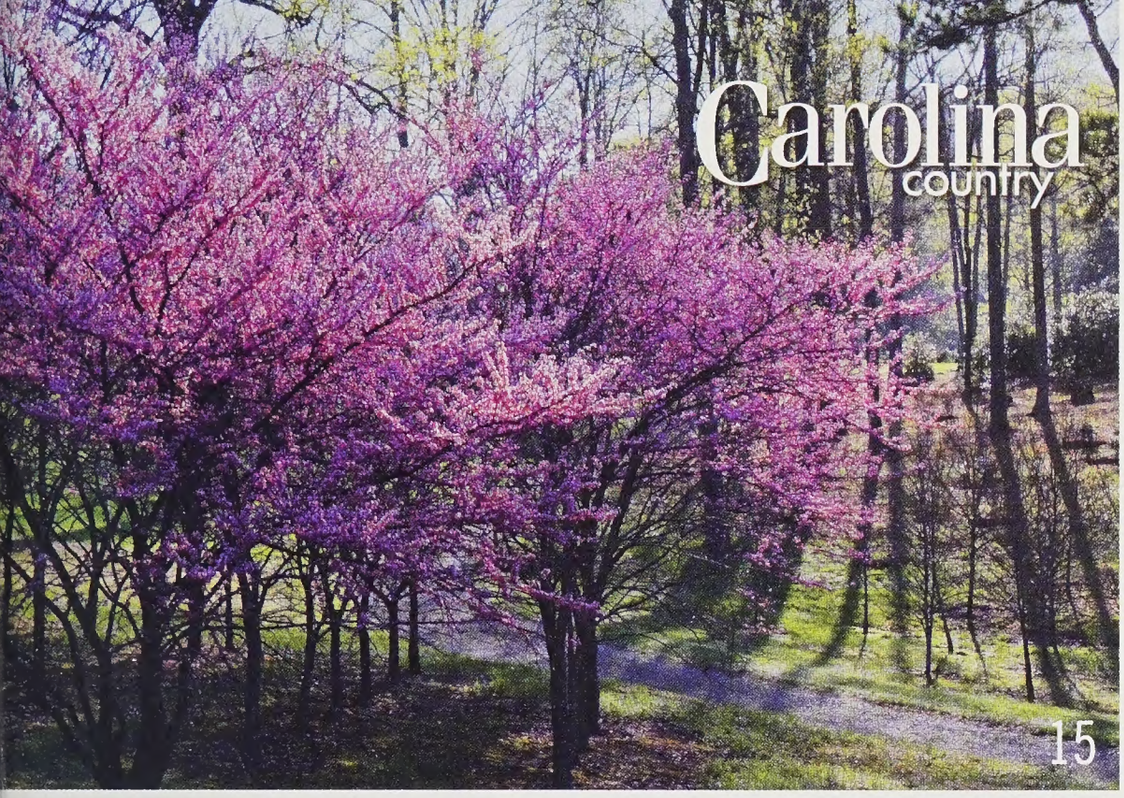

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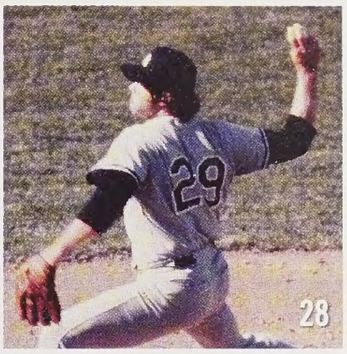

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Bloodroot is a native wildflower found in North Carolina primarily in the western mountains. Learn more about North Carolina native and non-native plants on pages 15-18. (Photo by Robert Travis)

Carolina country
(ISSN 0008-6746) (USPS 832800)

2010 George W. HAGGARD Memorial Journalism Award

Read monthly in more than 650,000 homes

Published monthly by North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

3400 Sumner Blvd.
Raleigh, NC 27616
www.carolinacountry.com

Editor
Michael E.C. Gery, (919) 875-3062
Senior Associate Editor
Renee C. Gannon, CCC, (919) 875-3209
Contributing Editor
Karen Olson House, (919) 875-3036

Creative Director
Tara Verna, (919) 875-3134
Senior Graphic Designer
Warren Kessler, (919) 875-3090
Graphic Designer
Linda Van de Zande, (919) 875-3110

Publication Business Specialist
Jenny Lloyd, (919) 875-3091
Advertising
Jennifer Boedart Hoey, (919) 875-3077

Executive Vice President & CED
Rick Thomas
Senior Vice President, Corporate Relations
Nelle Hotchkiss

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Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

Your co-op's board of directors authorizes a subscription to Carolina Country on behalf of the membership at a cost of less than $4 per year.

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Carolina Country magazine is a member of the National Country Market family of publications, collectively reaching over 8.4 million households.

Carolina Country is available on cassette tape as a courtesy of volunteer services at the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Raleigh, N.C. (888) 388-2460.

Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, N.C., and additional mailing offices. Editorial offices: 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, N.C. 27616. Carolina Country® is a registered trademark of the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes Form 3579 to Carolina Country, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.

Subscriptions: Individual subscriptions, $10 per year. $20 outside U.S.A. Schools, libraries, $6.

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The party line vs. common sense

By W. Max Walser

As an EnergyUnited board member, one of the more rewarding activities I participated in recently was the electric cooperative national legislative day in Washington, D.C. It is exciting to be one of 2,500 board members and employees from across the country advocating for affordable, reliable power issues to our elected officials in Congress at the same time. This year, our top issue was the continued funding of the Rural Utilities Service, or "RUS," (formerly REA) loan program at 2008 levels. RUS funding is distinct from other federal spending because it is a loan program, not a grant, and RUS loans are paid back with interest. RUS financing is a key part of our mission to provide safe, affordable and reliable power to our member-owners.

Some in Washington proposed reduced funding for the RUS loan program and restrictions on how the loans can be used. Since its inception, co-ops from across the country have relied on the RUS loan program to access loans in order to keep their systems up-to-date and reliable for their consumer-owners. These loans are paid back with interest, making the RUS loan program a money maker for the federal treasury. Given the nation's current focus on economic recovery and that affordable, reliable power is paramount to job creation, now is not the time to reduce funding to a program that ultimately makes money for the government and helps keep electric rates down for cooperative consumers.

We asked all members of the North Carolina Congressional delegation to sign a letter supporting protection of RUS financing. Ten members of the N.C. delegation signed the letter while five abstained. The 10 members who signed recognized the value of RUS loan program to co-op consumers and that the program will add more than $100 million to the U.S. Treasury. Co-ops use the lower-than-market funds through RUS to keep electric rates down by financing power line and substation construction upgrades and additions in order to pass the savings on to you.

Some members of our delegation told us they support the RUS program because it provides benefits in their district and will vote for it, but at this point their party's leadership will not let them sign the supporting letter. This raised my eyebrows, as well as those of my associates. I respect elected officials who stand by their positions, regardless of whether it is the same as mine. But it disturbed us when we heard, "I support your program, but my party leadership has this rule against asking for the funds." It was worth noting members of both parties have signed the letter.

Given the success of the RUS financing program which makes the government money, it's a matter of common sense for legislators to support the program. What doesn't make sense is when legislators can't put their support in writing, because it runs counter to the party line. As the budget debate unfolds, those members of Congress who have not signed the letter will still have a chance to support the RUS program.

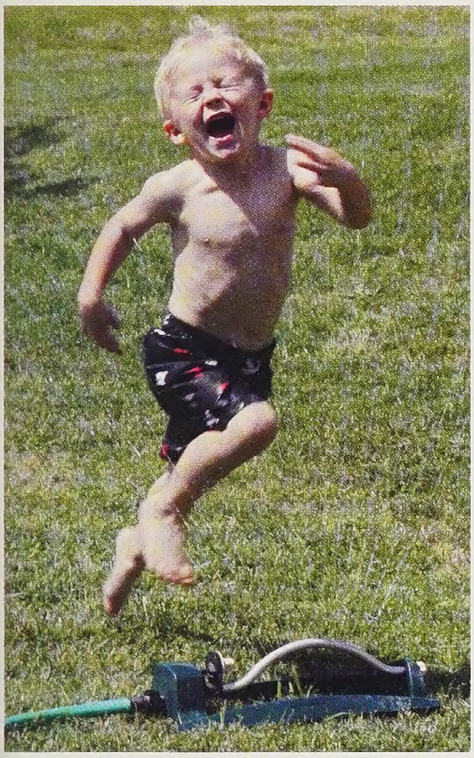
Thank you!
We thank the following members of Congress for their public show of support for North Carolina's electric cooperatives and the RUS loan program we depend on to help us serve you:

Rep. G. K. Butterfield of Wilson County (1st District)
Rep. Renee Ellmers of Harnett County (2nd District)
Rep. Walter B. Jones of Pitt County (3rd District)
Rep. Howard Coble of Guilford County (6th District)
Rep. Mike McIntyre of Robeson County (7th District)
Rep. Larry Kissell of Montgomery County (8th District)
Rep. Heath Shuler of Haywood County (11th District)
Rep. Mel Watt of Mecklenburg County (12th District)
Sen. Richard Burr
Sen. Kay Hagan

Dr. Max Walser is an elected member of the EnergyUnited board of directors. He also served as a Davidson County commissioner from 2002-2010. EnergyUnited is the Touchstone Energy cooperative that serves more than 120,000 member accounts in 19 counties of central and western North Carolina.

Recipe for a happy summer day

- 1 hot sunny day
- 1 yard of any size
- 1 garden hose
- 1 oscillating sprinkler
- 1 or more children in bathing suits



Yield: Pure summer happiness of children laughing, jumping and dancing.

Kathleen (Nina) Baxter

Help bees help you

I would like to encourage people to do a little beekeeping. Bees are very important to our communities and our health. We do not have enough bees to pollinate so that farm families can grow food and make a living.

I started beekeeping last year and have learned so much from the few beekeepers we still have. Most people just think, "I will get stung and it hurts." Well, if a bee stings at all, it can only sting once and then it dies. But everything they make does something good for people. Honey helps with your allergies. The pollen they spread makes food.

The Lincoln County beekeepers help each other. Join a beekeeping association. Get involved in helping people and plants.

Laurie Beal, Lincolnton

Moonshining back then is nothing to be proud of

I found the article "Legal Corn Liquor" [July 2011] very sad and hurtful. People should not boast about things they should be ashamed of doing back then: bootlegging, running from lawmen, putting innocent lives at risk. Many lives were wrecked because of their illegal products.

I grew up on a tobacco farm, but what we did we did it openly. We did not have to hide from the law. Some would say tobacco is worse than moonshine, but no man ever beat his wife or children because a cigarette made him mean.

My Granpa Branch was killed in a car wreck because he was drunk. He left behind a wife and seven young children. My dad was an old primitive Baptist minister. He lived honestly and decently. For this I am very thankful. Maybe 40 years from now someone will boast about their drug business.

Avery Branch, Elkin

Big heads

My father, Kenneth Ray Hunt, grew these cabbages in his garden. The biggest one weighed 34 pounds and was 13 inches wide. His granddaughter, Khloe Locklear, calls herself "Papa's Li'l Helper."

Jodie Hunt, Pembroke, Lumbee River EMC

Holton's pool

This was Holton's Swimming Pool on the corner of Holton Street (now Konnoak Drive) where Silas Creek Parkway crosses. I am 92 years old, and I used to swim here in 1928–29. The pool was abandoned in the 1940s.

Alfred J. Hammons, Kernersville

Where Mama grew up

I recently took my 5-year-old son Will out to the house where I grew up. He took off running down the driveway to get a better look at "the house where Mama grew up."

When I was living there it was just an old, drafty, hot-in-the-summer, cold-in-the-winter house. But now, it's "home," where I was raised. I learned to ride my bike on the same driveway he's running down. I've lost more of Mama's spoons in that same field than I care to admit. It may have not been the newest or the nicest house, but it raised me well.

Melissa Bass, Clinton, South River EMC

Contact us

Website: www.carolinacountry.com
E-mail: editor@carolinacountry.com
Phone: (919) 875-3062
Fax: (919) 878-3970
Mail: 3400 Sumner Blvd.
Raleigh, NC 27616

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Killing birds back then is nothing to be proud of

Regarding "The Return of the Joe Reets," [July 2011], you should know that the Migratory Bird Treaty Act enacted in 1918 prohibits the killing, taking and selling of migratory and songbirds. At that time the fine for killing one bird was $500 or 6 months in jail, or both.

Maureen Davis, Morehead City

Julius Rosenwald back then was a man to be proud of

The article about the Rosenwald rural school building program [June 2011] was very interesting and inspiring. Our family was well aware of the Rosenwald Fund because of its support of many New York City charitable projects, and I was very glad to read about the work that created the schools.

Julius Rosenwald's life story itself is inspiring. He was the son of immigrant Jewish parents and never forgot his roots as he climbed the ladder of financial success as part-owner of Sears, Roebuck and Company.

In 1911, he said, "The horrors that are due to race prejudice come home to the Jew more forcefully than to others of the white race, on account of the centuries of persecution which they have suffered and still suffer."

Mr. Rosenwald wanted his fund to benefit all mankind, and he certainly did his best!

Ruth Etkin, Banner Elk

A church youth group to be proud of

My youth group went to Thomasville one Saturday not long ago to help make packed lunches and deliver them to people in the community who couldn't afford much. I went with two other people from to deliver food to about three families. No one answered at the first door, so we went on to the next one on the list. The lady who answered was very young and looked to have had about four kids. You could tell they didn't have a lot. You could see that they had no furniture and hardly anything in the kitchen. We gave them around eight bag lunches and a bag of apples. The kids looked like they were going to Disney World when they saw the apples.

We visited the next family, and the guy said it was only his wife and himself, and he wouldn't accept much. When we left, we still had some lunches and apples. So we went back to the second family and gave them what remained. You could see one of the young boys eating an apple with juice pouring down his face. He looked so happy, I thought I was going to cry. It's amazing how much I can afford but how much they can't.

Preston Elliott, Four Mile Desert, Albemarle EMC

Summer Love

The call of the tomato sandwich

Story and photo by Kevin McCabe

It's always a major decision to toast it or not

If fate delivered you onto a deserted island, what would you miss the most? Certainly family, friends, and lovers would be at the top of the list. However, if you survived for any length of time on that island, I imagine your list would grow much longer. I think the season of the year would determine the contents of my list. Heaven forbid if I were placed on this lonely island during the summer. That's when my garden is in full swing, and I pick my first tomatoes.

I can live without a lot of things, but I cannot live without several tomato sandwiches a day in the summertime. My wife feels the same way. It's what's for lunch every day. My tomatoes will find their way into the breakfast menu too. Sunday morning in my kitchen will see grilled tomato, pepper and egg sandwiches or chopped tomato omelets. Dinner will also find tomatoes hiding under the salad or cooked down into a world-class sauce for a variety of pasta. There must be 100 ways to enjoy a tomato. But I get excited every time I know there's a tomato sandwich in my future.

The construction of a tomato sandwich should be very simple and short. White bread, mayonnaise, sliced tomato and maybe a little salt and pepper. Right? Well, not so quick. There's a large variety of bread out there to choose from these days. You can get dizzy looking around in the bread aisle. Somehow I evolved into really liking oat bread. It's always a major decision to toast it or not. Then there's mayonnaise. I guess everyone has his or her own favorite that was probably passed down through genetics. For many years we always used Dukes. One day, in a health-conscious rage, I decided to try an olive oil-based brand. Guess what? I actually liked it and even thought it tasted better.

Now, there's only one word that should never be spoken when it comes to making a real tomato sandwich: additives.

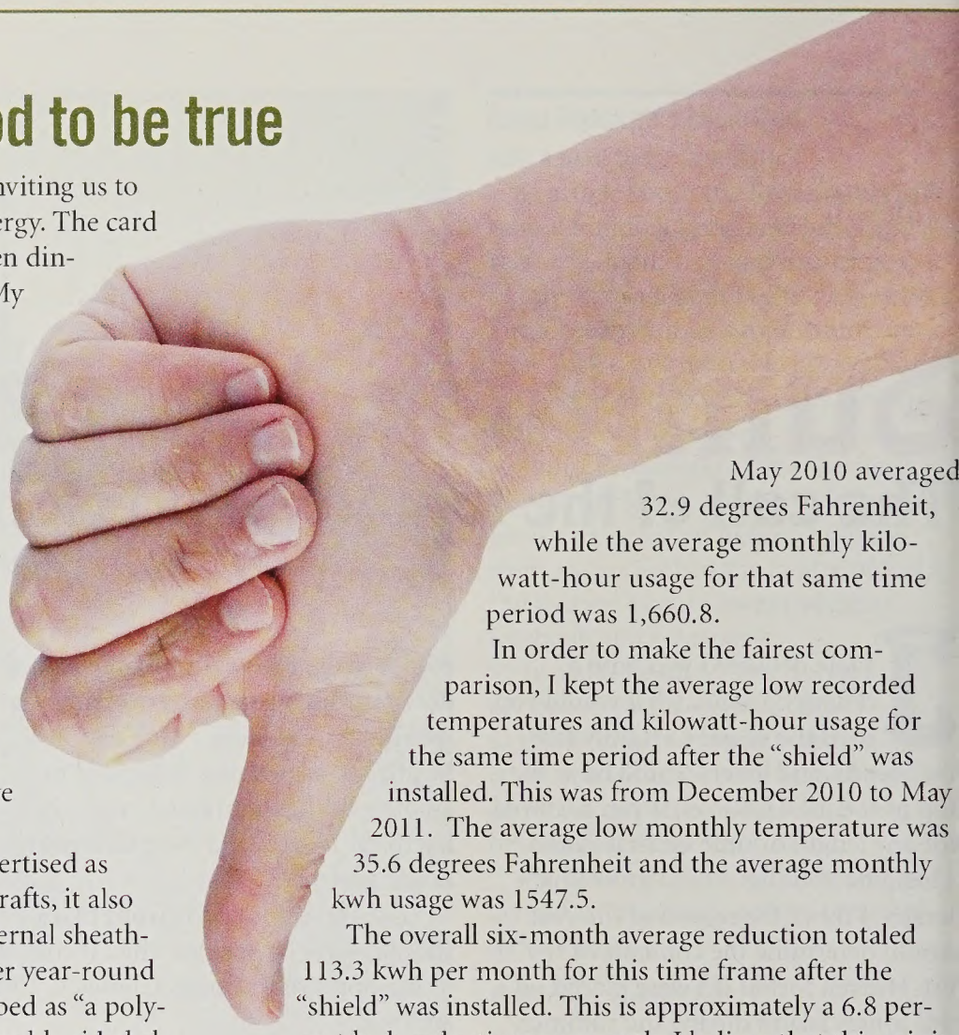
There, I said it. I must admit every once in a while I'll add a thin slice of red or white onion. Sometimes a cut-up jalapeno has been known to jump on board too. My wife will spread a little freshly made pesto onto the bread but still uses mayonnaise. I hope these confessions are met with mercy amongst you true tomato sandwich connoisseurs. I'll assure you these minor additives don't happen very often, if they do happen at all.

It's getting near lunchtime and my mouth is starting to water. There are two vine-ripe tomatoes on my window ledge and their fate has been sealed. The dog days of summer are barking loud. However, I'm at peace with myself knowing I don't have to worry about lunch until the first frost arrives.

If you don't grow your own tomatoes, I suggest you try. A classic tomato sandwich is right behind watermelon and the 4th of July when it comes to summer. I love a big bright vine-ripe tomato. I hope there's one in your near future.

Kevin McCabe and his wife, Kim Mosher, live in Buxton and are members of Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative.

This deal was too good to be true



In October 2010 we received a postcard inviting us to attend a demonstration about saving energy. The card said we would receive either a free chicken dinner or rib-eye steak dinner for attending. My wife and I attended the presentation where the representatives showed an impressive amount of energy savings by using two of their several products. The two products were a "reflective insulation shield" and an energy-saving "Green Box" technology.

The "Green Box" was described as being a way to help an electrical inductance motor extend its service life and also reduce a homeowner's electrical consumption. I inquired in late December 2010, as to the then advertised Underwriters Labs (UL), Honeywell and NASA independent evaluation of the item. As of this date I have not received any reply to my inquiry.

The "reflective insulation shield" was advertised as something that "does more than just stop drafts, it also effectively seals up cracks or gaps in the external sheathing, blocking radiant heat, resulting in better year-round efficiency and comfort levels." It was described as "a polyethylene foam core with scrim reinforced double sided aluminum facings" that "can be used in all facets of the building industry where conventional insulations are used." They advertised a 20 to 30 percent reduction in electricity usage from this product.

I bought their "reflective insulation shield" and had it installed in December 2010 on my house for $2,999. The product is a dismal failure. I would appreciate any help in disseminating information that this is probably a scam that may affect other unsuspecting consumers.

Since moving to my current location in September 2007, I have kept comprehensive temperature records and used these temperatures as a base to determine the effectiveness of the "reflective insulation shield" to reduce my electricity usage as the company advertised. I have made temperature readings daily between the hours of 6:30 and 7:30 a.m., which are considered the lowest temperatures of the day.

Prior to the "shield" being installed, the average monthly low temperature for the time frame December 2009 to May 2010 averaged 32.9 degrees Fahrenheit, while the average monthly kilowatt-hour usage for that same time period was 1,660.8.

In order to make the fairest comparison, I kept the average low recorded temperatures and kilowatt-hour usage for the same time period after the "shield" was installed. This was from December 2010 to May 2011. The average low monthly temperature was 35.6 degrees Fahrenheit and the average monthly kwh usage was 1547.5.

The overall six-month average reduction totaled 113.3 kwh per month for this time frame after the "shield" was installed. This is approximately a 6.8 percent kwh reduction per month. I believe that this miniscule reduction was due to the slightly warmer temperatures, not because of the "shield."

The return on my investment to install the "shield" at a cost of $2,999, calculated at my current kwh rate, will take me approximately 272.9 months or 22.7 years to break even, if my electric rate remains steady for 22.7 years.

I believe the advertised energy savings is a farce.

I hope others do not become a victim of this scam.

A member of Blue Ridge Electric

Editor's Note: This co-op member asked to have his name and location withheld while he pursues a resolution with the business he refers to. Similar offers have been made in this and other regions of the country, and his experience is not uncommon. Electric cooperatives routinely advise their members to be wary of energy-saving claims that seem "too good to be true." Contact your cooperative if you have questions or would like information on using energy efficiently.

"Move over" for utility trucks

A year-old state law requires motorists to switch lanes or slow down when passing a utility service vehicle performing emergency work while parked on the side of the road. The "move over" requirement was extended from an earlier law pertaining to law enforcement and emergency response vehicles. The provision exempts situations where moving into another travel lane is not safe.

North Carolina's clean energy resources

A new guide to North Carolina's clean energy resources was published this summer by the NC Sustainable Energy Association.

The guide identifies the state's clean energy resources, installed projects, business and job creation opportunities, and what regions of the state are leading the way. The NCSEA, a membership organization representing individuals, businesses, government and non-profits that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency, compiled the information in the **2011 NC Clean Energy Data Book**.

For more information, visit http://energync.org.

Students represent their cooperatives on the annual tour of Washington, D.C.

Sixteen North Carolina electric cooperatives sponsored a total of 30 rising high school seniors to the nation's capital in June for the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington.

In addition to touring many of the city's monuments and museums, the group met with Congressional representatives. Both U.S. Senators Richard Burr and Kay Hagan, as well as 12 of North Carolina's 13 House of Representatives members, participated in a question-and-answer session with the students. Sen. Hagan provided access to the Senate gallery to watch her preside over the Senate. Rep. Virginia Foxx led the group on a tour of the Capitol area and Speaker's balcony, culminating in a visit to the House gallery to observe floor activity.

Allan Keathley, sponsored by Tri-County EMC, asked Rep. Walter Jones of Farmville how to get Internet access to his home, and Rep. Jones followed up personally to tell him how and where to send his inquiry.

Carmen Gardner, the Surry-Yadkin EMC delegate, said she changed her mind during the visits about legislators, noting that they care about the people they serve and respect each other as colleagues.

The students elected Douglas Stephens IV, sponsored by South River EMC, as their representative to the Youth Leadership Council. He will represent North Carolina's electric cooperatives among the other YLC delegates at various national functions throughout the year.

Brandon Reed

North Carolina's electric cooperatives sponsored 30 students on the annual tour of Washington, D.C., in June.

Wake Electric cited for environmental efforts

Wake Electric and Consert, Inc., a provider of energy management technology for residences and small businesses, recently received an environmental award from the city of Raleigh.

In 2009, Wake Electric and Consert completed an eight-month, smart grid technology pilot program that achieved such goals as improved demand forecasting and management of peak loads while helping Wake Electric's members become more energy efficient. The pilot program moved to commercialization under its new name, the Monitor & Manage Program.

Raleigh created The Raleigh Environmental Awards to recognize outstanding work in sustainable development and environmental stewardship. The program awards individuals and organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to the environment.

U.S. nuclear reactors are deemed safe

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) inspectors have confirmed that the nation's 104 operating nuclear reactors are capable of cooling their reactor cores in the event of an emergency. NRC began the inspection process following the disaster at Japan's Fukushima nuclear power plant. Inspections focused on three areas: reactor safety, radiation safety and safeguards. Within each area, inspectors analyzed emergency preparedness, mitigating systems, initiating events, barrier integrity, public radiation safety, occupational radiation safety and physical protection.

"Out of 65 operating reactor sites, 12 had issues with one or more of the requirements during the inspections," NRC said in releasing the results. "Many of these discrepancies deal with training. Three of the 12 sites have already resolved their issues, and the remaining sites are actively working to resolve theirs."

Try This!

Efficiency upgrades that make sense

By Brian Sloboda

Surveys show that only about 15 percent of folks actually take steps to enhance the energy efficiency of their home. In most cases, people feel that energy efficiency improvements are too complicated or too expensive to tackle.

However, there are several simple upgrades you can consider that won't break your household budget. Following are a few:

Lighting

Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) may look odd, but more and more homeowners are installing these energy-efficient lights. One CFL uses about 75 percent less energy and can save more than $40 over its lifetime compared to a traditional incandescent lightbulb, according to estimates by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program. Some people initially did not like CFLs because of their color or light quality, but CFLs have improved. In most lamps and fixtures, you probably won't notice a difference using a CFL.

Heating and air conditioning

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that heating and air conditioning account for 22 percent of a typical home's annual electric bill. While an air-source heat pump or a geothermal heat pump can be 20 percent to 45 percent more efficient than an existing central heating and cooling system, up-front installation costs are often a barrier.

Simple solutions such as changing air filters when needed will increase airflow to rooms, increase the life of your central heating and cooling unit's motor, and improve air quality. Sealing and insulating ductwork can be done in a weekend and result in energy savings of up to 20 percent.

To lessen the amount of work that heating and cooling systems need to do, it's important to find and fix air leaks in and around your home. Also, simple acts such as cooking outdoors on a hot summer day and drawing curtains closed to block the summer sun will keep the interior of your home cooler and reduce the amount of time your air conditoning units need to operate.

Appliances and electronics

Gadgets and equipment that make life easier are also some of the largest electric users in our homes. When buying a new appliance, look for the Energy Star label. Energy Star products will use 10 percent to 15 percent less energy than non-certified items. Some states, including North Carolina, have adopted Energy Star holidays during which sales tax is waived on the purchase of qualifying Energy Star-rated appliances. (Carolina Country magazine publishes information on these when they are held.)

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives

Sealing ductwork is one good way to save energy and money.

To keep appliances running more efficiently, try these tips:

- Clean lint traps on dryers and don't over-dry clothes.
- Replace worn refrigerator door gaskets to stop cool air from seeping out.
- Clean refrigerator coils and keep refrigerators away from heat-generating appliances such as an oven.

Many home electronics, like computers, TVs, and DVD players, consume power even when turned off. Called "vampire" or "phantom" load, the average home loses 8 percent of its monthly energy consumption to these devices. In fact, a full 75 percent of the power used to run home electronics is consumed when they're turned off, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Plugging these items into a power strip or a smart strip and turning off the strip when not in use remains the best way to stop this loss of energy.

For more information, contact the energy experts at your local electric cooperative or visit www.EnergySavers.gov.

Brian Sloboda is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Can you help others save energy?
Send your conservation ideas or questions to us: P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611, or E-mail: editor@carolinacountry.com

You can't beat that with a stick!

By Donna Campbell Smith

I have lived for six years in a house I rent on a lovely farm in Franklin County. A long driveway lined with oak and hickory trees leads to my house, which is situated on a hill in a grove of more oak trees. In the six years I have lived on this farm, I have lost power not more than five or six times. Only twice did it take more than an hour or so for Wake Electric to restore my power. Even in the midst of a snow and ice storm I did not go more than a day without electricity. I think that is amazing. One reason is because my Wake Electric cooperative keeps the trees along my driveway—a drive almost a quarter-mile long—clear from the power lines.

Not until last summer when a caravan of trucks from Wake Electric arrived on the farm have I had the chance to observe the tree-trimming procedure. I was at my desk watching in fascination as the men trimmed off branches that had grown too close to the power lines, which run through the farm to my house and to another building farther down the lane. The men ran the branches through a machine, like celery in a food processor, that reduced them to clippings. Then they deposited the chopped and ground-up tree limbs into the back of a dump truck.

My heart skipped a beat at the sight of that wonderful truckload of mulch. So I hurried out to speak to one of the workers to see what was to become of it.

"Is it possible for you to leave that in my backyard?" I asked.

He asked me where I wanted it dumped. By day's end there were three big piles of wonderful mulch—one for the landlord, one for the man who leases the pasture to raise cattle, and one for me. I had a project planned and used some of the mulch right away to cover a path in a little garden nook.

Winter produced several snows, a bit more than I liked, truth be told. With the first few warm days of March I started thinking about planting again. I cleared a little spot where I wanted to plant some blueberry bushes. I started digging into my mulch pile to find that once I got into the bottom my mulch had miraculously turned into rich compost. I was surprised the process had taken place in what seemed a short time. But when I thought about it, I realized several months had passed and the snow probably helped things along, slowly melting and soaking the clippings. I was thrilled because the rocky, sandy soil needs all the organic enrichment I can offer it. I have several containers filled with the compost and planted with flowers. And I added some to a raised bed where I plant a little kitchen garden.

Once the trees' leaves reappeared, you can hardly tell the branches have been trimmed. I feel assured my power outages will continue to be few and far between, plus I have the added bonus of being able to recycle the debris as mulch and compost for my gardening. As the saying goes, "You can't beat that deal with a stick!"

Left: *Now that the tree leaves have reappeared, we can hardly tell the branches have been trimmed.*

Right: *My planter has great flowers, thanks to the Wake Electric compost.*

Todd General Store

Art by Cathy Cranford Futral

Todd General Store is an Ashe County landmark located on Hwy. 194 between Boone and West Jefferson along the South Fork of the New River. It's an authentic general store that includes a deli, homemade meals on Tuesday and Friday evenings well into the fall, storytelling, live music, book signings, local crafts and more.

Watercolor artist Cathy Cranford Futral is a North Carolina native who lives nearby in summer. She teaches at Cheap Joe's Art Stuff in Boone, and her art is on display at the Dan'l Boone Inn in Boone. In winter she lives in Florida and teaches at South Florida Community College.

The watercolor image of "Todd General Store," as well as others, are available as giclee prints at 11 by 14 inches for $25 and 16 by 20 inches for $55. See them at the Dan'l Boone Inn or send e-mail requests to futralc@southflorida.edu.

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Dogwood and pinkshell azalea (Rhododendron vaseyi) turn Daniel Boone Native Gardens in Boone into a fairyland in spring.

Growing Our Own

Western North Carolina natives are growing wild

Story and photos by Hannah Miller

Western North Carolina wildflowers can be bright bits of color peeking out from under a woodland shrub: They are yellow lady's-slippers. Or a glorious June profusion of purple on a mountain hillside: That would be Catawba rhododendron.

Or the native plants can be the hold-your-nose-and-swallow springtime phenomenon that sets strong men gagging at firefighters' fundraisers: Those would be ramps.

They're all part of North Carolinians' distinctive wild heritage, says Joe-Ann McCoy, head of the Bent Creek Institute Germplasm Repository, a collection of plant reproductive material at the N.C. Arboretum in Asheville.

The glaciers of the last several Ice Ages spared North Carolina, and as a result, the area's huge variety of plants survived when much of the plant life disappeared elsewhere on the continent, she says. As far as plant diversity is concerned, "This is a very, very special place."

Descendants of those hardy Ice Age survivors are facing their own threats these days, as 21st century development replaces forestland and cash-strapped residents try to counter a shaky economy by harvesting wild plants themselves. But as the problems mount, official agency attempts to protect and perpetuate the plants are being joined by determined grassroots efforts, some by members of mountain-area electric cooperatives.

This rare pinkshell azalea (Rhododendron vaseyi), one of the first mountain plants to bloom in spring, was saved and replanted at Daniel Boone Native Gardens by Kit Fisher and other volunteers.

Growing our own

"These plants are beautiful," says Blue Ridge EMC member Jacky Brown, who with her friend and fellow Blue Ridge member, Dianne Upson, inspected black cohosh at a Boone native-plant sale. Brown grows native plants in her garden, she says, because she feels it's important "to do what you can to continue it."

Displaying their wares at the plant sale, sponsored by Daniel Boone Native Gardens, were Blue Ridge EMC members Jon and Kim Moretz of Pond Mountain Farm and Forge in Creston. Getting into propagating and selling native plants was strictly a business decision 10 years ago for Jon Moretz and his father, the late Jim Moretz, who'd moved to Creston from a Watauga County farm.

"Tobacco went out. There's no money in cattle," they concluded.

So they settled on growing native plants to sell to the landscaping and home gardening market, despite the fact that the blossoms are often what one nursery owner calls "small and insignificant, not showy-showy." Some, like

Kit Fisher, Blue Ridge EMC member and volunteer with Daniel Boone Native Gardens, shows off "rescued" dwarf crested iris transplanted to the garden.

the lady's-slippers in the orchid family, also have a symbiotic relationship with a fungus in the soil. Jon Moretz solves the "alien soil" problem by collecting seeds in the wild, then growing the plants on his own forestland to mimic their woodland home. Though conservation wasn't his motivation, it makes him feel good to know he's perpetuating his native heritage.

"I saw our old home farm," he said. "And basically, we destroyed it. You can't plow the same field and plant the same crop (cabbages and tobacco) over 75 years. Wildflowers was a crop we thought we could make a profit on without doing that."

Harvesting natives: Be careful

For generations, many mountain residents have been wildcrafters or harvesters, going into the forests to dig native plants like ginseng for their medicinal properties or picking the glossy leaves of galax for the floral trade. There's nothing wrong with that, says U.S. Forest Service botanist Gary Kauffman, who monitors Pisgah and Nantahala forests, if it's done so that the plants' continued existence is ensured.

"Sustainable harvest" is his byword: reseeding, leaving the small plants while taking the big ones, and taking pressure off the wild population with domestic cultivation. It's a theme trumpeted by the 70-member Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association, formed a dozen years ago by area farmers threatened with loss of tobacco income. With the help of North Carolina State University, they've learned how to propagate and grow the natives. They've also learned sustainable wild-harvest techniques, especially for ramps, which they make into ramp meal, ramp flakes and ramp seasonings for the commercial market.

Now, the medicinally-popular goldenseal, which they grow, has been removed from the state's list of endangered, threatened and "special concern" plants, says association spokesperson Beverly Whitehead of Graham County. Also, she says, "Our ramps are coming back in the wild."

A new crop

Native plants as an economic aid to farmers also led to the founding of Branch Out in the 1990s in the Mitchell/Avery/Yancey county area. Using methane from a defunct landfill, nonprofit Branch Out, part of Energy Xchange, now sells some $20,000 worth of three-year old rhododendron and dog hobble a year. Greenhouse coordinator Susie Bennett says customers range from home gardeners and nurseries to "a lot of Christmas tree growers who are trying to subsidize their crop during the time of year when Christmas trees aren't selling."

A Branch Out spinoff, a micropropagation lab, is currently growing future business people along with plants at Mayland College in Spruce Pine. Lab director Rita McKinney, a member of French Broad EMC, says that the lab uses its cloned plants "to teach young people how to go home, set up their labs and go in business for themselves."

There have been no comprehensive studies recently on how plants are faring in the wild. Forest Service botanist Gary Kauffman gets informal reports on high-dollar crops ginseng and galax. He has the impression that ginseng plots are numerous but small. As for galax, he says, "The only thing that's saving that plant is . . .it can produce a lot of leaves very fast."

The current "green revolution," with its emphasis on conserving the Earth's resources, may be helping the cause of domestically cultivated plants, says Jon Moretz. He used to take plants to sell at the Ashe County Farmers Market and hear: "That's a weed. Who wants a weed?"

Now he hears, "This is gorgeous."

Hannah Miller is a Carolina Country contributing writer who lives in Charlotte.

Going Wild?

Transplanting:

- Dig only on your own property or where you have permission.
- Know what you're doing. The trout lily, for example, puts out an underground tuber than can reach 3 feet.
- If you only have one, don't move it.
- Moving federally-listed endangered, threatened and "special concern" species is prohibited. www.fws.gov/Asheville. Moving N.C.-listed plants requires landowner's permission and a state permit. www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry/plant/plantconserve/index.htm

Growing:

"Growing and Propagating Wildflowers," Harry R. Phillips, UNC Press.

Wildcrafting:

Ginseng: Plants five years or older Sept. 1–Dec. 31, with landowner's written permission. Replant seeds on-site.

No harvest:

DuPont State Forest, N.C. state parks, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Blue Ridge Parkway.

Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests:

Prohibited: Log moss, flame azalea, N.C. National Heritage-listed "rare" plants (www.ncnhp.org); federal- and state-listed "endangered, threatened and special concern" plants (www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry).

With permit from district ranger: Floral (galax, prohibited April 15-June 15; dogwood, rhododendrons, azaleas); Medicinals (ginseng permitted Sept. 1-30, bloodroot, black cohosh, fairy wand, angelica); Edibles (ramps over 5 pounds).

Harvesting techniques:

Workshops: Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association, www.smnpa.org

Ramps: Leave root plate and part of bulb.

Black cohosh: Leave part of root.

Ginseng: Harvest mature seeds (Sept.), replant 1 inch deep.

Galax: Leave roots. Don't walk through plants April 15–June 15.

Look out!

Those invading plants don't belong here!

How to know and grow your native landscape

By Amy Ney

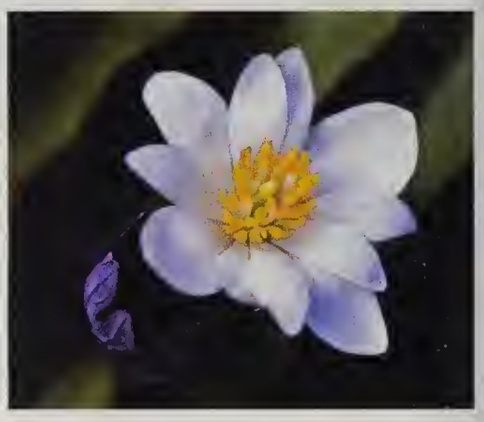
If you've been to the mountains, you've probably seen kudzu vines literally smothering a forest edge. Or oriental bittersweet winding its way around trees inside the forest, literally choking them to death. Both are excellent examples of invasive, exotic plants—species that have been introduced to a region, either on purpose or accidentally, and have spread out of control. Because invasive plants are out of their original locale, the native control mechanisms (competing vegetation, insects, diseases, animals or weather patterns) are not in place. These plants can take over the landscape, pushing out the native plants that feed and shelter our native wildlife. They also disturb the beauty of the native landscape in our national parks and forests and can be very difficult and costly to remove. Plant diversity is greatly reduced, sometimes to just a single invasive plant.

Invasive plants fall into every category, from trees to grasses. Purple blooms of the princess tree or paulownia can be seen throughout western North Carolina in April and May, creating thousands of tiny wind-spread seeds per pod which continue the spread of this invasive. Leaves of the winged burning bush turn scarlet in the fall, making invasive forest colonies easy to spot, although hard to remove. English ivy, periwinkles and big blue lilyturf or creeping liriope are all commonly used groundcovers which can spread out of control from even the most dedicated gardener. These are just a few of the many species which are permanently changing the face of our landscape.

Eastern redbud is a native species and can substitute for the non-native princess tree.

◄ *A native female purple finch and some non-native Oriental bittersweet.*

▼ *The bloodroot, native in the Piedmont and mountains, has medicinal qualities and can be grown in shade or woodlands.*



One of the major problems with invasive plants is that they are often innocently used in our home landscapes and then wind, water, animal fur and droppings can carry seeds for miles to start a new, but unintended, colony of a plant. Many species also spread through root systems, no seed dispersal required. Numerous public agencies recommend that landowners should not plant invasives, and should remove and destroy those that may already be in the home landscape. It is recommended that one invasive not even be used as a decoration. Oriental bittersweet, which has beautiful fall berries and is often used to make wreaths, is wreaking havoc in western forests and costing taxpayer dollars to remove from places like Bent Creek Experimental Forest (part of Pisgah National Forest in Asheville).

Bring in the natives

Instead of using invasive plants, why not incorporate their native counterparts into your landscape? Native plants help provide wildlife habitat (which is decreasing due to development), promote biodiversity, are adapted to the climate, and are generally easier to maintain and require less water than invasives. Instead of the paulownia, consider the southern catalpa or the eastern redbud. The burning bush can be replaced by a native azalea or fothergilla. Native phlox, aster or ferns are excellent groundcover choices. You might also consider planting edibles such as apple or pawpaw trees, blueberry bushes or herbs for an aesthetically pleasing landscape and healthy, free produce.

Two great resources for determining which native plants are suited for your region are your local Cooperative Extension agent and the Going Native website: www.ncsu.edu/goingnative. The site is a cooperative effort between the N.C. Forest Service and N.C. Cooperative Extension Service and walks you through each step of designing your own native landscape, including suggesting native plants for your site conditions and where you can purchase them.

As you choose native plants for your landscape, remember to factor in your light and moisture availability, as well as soil pH. To protect native plant colonies, you should buy nursery-propagated plants instead of digging from the wild. And do your research on invasives before shopping. Ask at the nursery about each plant's invasive status. Many invasive plants are still commonly sold at local nurseries and home improvement stores.

You can be an ambassador for the environment just by encouraging friends and neighbors to do the same. One landowner at a time can make a collective difference by growing a native landscape!

Amy Ney is a freelance writer with a background in private land management. She lives in Haywood County and is a member of Haywood EMC. Related land management information can be found at www.woodlandstewardseries.org.

Resources

A Field Guide for the Identification of Invasive Plants in Southern Forests
(USDA Forest Service publication SRS-119). Free. Call (828) 257-4830 or go online at http://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:IPSF.

Native Plants for Your Backyard
(US Fish & Wildlife Service publication)
www.se-eppc.org/pubs/pubbck7.pdf

Landscaping with Native Plants in Western North Carolina
(lists plants and their site characteristics)
www.ashevillebotanicalgardens.org

NCSU Database of Native Trees, Shrubs and Woody Vines
www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/native/index-native.html

Botanical Gardens at Asheville
151 WT Weaver Boulevard
Asheville, NC 28804-3414
(828) 252-5190
www.ashevillebotanicalgardens.org

North Carolina Botanical Garden
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DEAR DORRIS: I am a vibrant woman of 55 years old. I feel 25 years old still, but I have lately developed these wrinkles and dark circles under my eyes along with puffy bags, that make me look older than I am.
I have tried many products that the Celebrities endorse, but they didn't work. Is there any product out there that can really get rid of these wrinkles, bags and dark circles?

Dark and Baggy, Charlotte , NC

DEAR DARKNESS : There is definitely a product that really works on your three big problems of wrinkles, dark circles, and bags. The product is the industry's best kept secret, and it's called the **Dermagist Eye Revolution Gel®** It is a light gel that you apply around the eye area, that has some serious scientific ingredients that do exactly what you're looking for. It has the ingredient, Haloxyl, which penetrates the skin and breaks up the blood particles that cause those dark circles. Another ingredient, Eyeliss works to release the fat pockets that develop under the eye that appear as bags.

The Dermagist Eye Revolution Gel® also works on wrinkles by using Stem Cells to regenerate healthy skin cells, and reduce wrinkles. As an overall treatment for the skin around the eye area, this product is a serious choice that the other creams only aspire to compete with. Since it's priced affordably, it will not be long until the whole world is talking about it.

The Dermagist Eye Revolution Gel® is available online at Dermagist.com or you can order or learn more by calling toll-free, **888-771-5355.** Oh, I almost forgot… I was given a promo code when I placed my order that gave me 10% off. The code was "**NCE2**". It's worth a try to see if it still works.

I Remember...

My brother David had something to crow about with our uncle.

Uncle Ralph and David

When my brother David was little, he would go outside and call our Uncle Ralph. It was difficult for David to say "Uncle Ralph," so he would crow like a rooster. Every time we visited Uncle Ralph, David was right at his heels. He would go feed the chickens, and David would stand in the yard crowing until Uncle Ralph would crow back. David would run toward the sound of his voice.

Our uncle taught David many things as he grew up: how to grow the best tomatoes, keep the deer out of the garden and much more.

Today, almost 50 years later, David is taking care of Uncle Ralph. Their roles have reversed. David provides him with transportation to doctor appointments, weekly grocery shopping and family get-togethers. David is always there when Uncle Ralph needs him. It is now the younger one's turn to take care of the older generation.

Jane Van Hoy, Statesville, EnergyUnited

Mom's clean sheets

When I was growing up, my fondest memory of springtime was my Mom coming into my room every Saturday morning (at what seemed to be the crack of dawn to a 6-year-old) to strip the bed and do the laundry. She did this until the day I grew up and moved out. She would wash the sheets and blankets but never put them in the dryer. The freshly washed bedding would always be hung out on the clothesline in our backyard to dry.

After bath time, when I would go to bed at night, my whole room smelled so fresh and clean. I asked her why it always smelled so good. She would say, "Mother Nature and God have blown away all the worries and troubles, and now you can start over with fresh dreams and hopes."

I lost my Mom this past October, but when I go to bed on freshly washed sheets, I always think of her.

Kathy Omasta, Wake Forest, Wake Electric

My daughter Sue Pearsall took this picture of me in front of my corn. I look like a dwarf because the corn is 11 feet high and I'm only 4-foot-11.

My two-apron garden

Being a farmer most of my life, I get farming fever in the spring. I have a small plot about 20-by-20 feet behind my storage building. I asked a neighbor if he would till it up for me, which he did. I got busy with my hoe, made the rows and planted them. I also weeded the garden with a hoe.

I was quite pleased with my efforts. I raised tomatoes, hot peppers, sweet peppers, okra, cucumbers, corn, squash, fall peas, Kentucky wonder green beans, and butterbeans. My fall planting consists of turnips, rutabagas, mustard and cranberry beans. I pick okra, peas, butterbeans and greens in the fall until frost kills them. I share my vegetables with my family.

I'm 74 years old and in good health and very thankful to God for that.

Doris Tart, Harrells, Four County EMC

Pick-up lines

Back in February 1997, I was just moving in, and a neighbor boy wanted to be nice and meet the new kid on the block. He came up to my front porch, and the town drunk was there trying to stand up, but when he saw this boy he left in a hurry. (This was not a little boy.)

My new neighbor said to me, "Do you know anything about telephones?"

I replied, "If they ring, I pick them up."

To this, he replied, "You will do."

That was his pick-up line.

On this October 4, we will be happily married 13 years. Everyone said it wouldn't last six months.

My husband is the kind of man who would give you the shirt off his back. And all he could think of was telephones.

Lavonda "Sissy" Helms, Maiden, Rutherford EMC

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7. **E-mail:** iremember@carolinacountry.com **Or by U.S. mail:** I Remember, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616

Do your homework for back-to-school gadgets

Gone are the days when back-to-school shopping meant buying only notebooks, pencils and backpacks. For most high school and college students, some form of technology is on the "must-have" list.

"With so many options available, it's important for parents to shop smart and choose the tools that will really meet their student's needs," says Jamie Breneman of www.TheSavvyShopperBlog.com. "Many of these devices can be used throughout high school and college, so you want to make sure you're getting the best value for your investment."

Check speed, memory

No matter what electronic device you're looking into, make sure it will do what your student will need it to do. When shopping for a laptop or notebook computer, for example:

- Check the processor speed. A good laptop should have a speed of at least 1 gigahertz (GHz).
- Look for RAM. RAM, short for random access memory, is what laptops use to store temporary data. The more RAM, the less time it takes to get information, and you can do more tasks without slowing down the laptop.
- Compare hard drives. The storage capacity of a hard drive is measured in gigabytes (GB), and you'll find laptops that range from 40 GB to 500 GB. Storing text documents won't take up much of the hard drive, but storing photos and videos or running games will.

Product reviews

You'll also want to read reviews—both independent reviews and reviews from people who have used the device you are considering. The website www.CNet.com offers independent reviews, while sites such as www.ConsumerSearch.com offer a mix of independent and user reviews.

Check out product reviews before purchasing pricey devices such as laptops.

Do a reality check

Sure, students may want the newest gadget out there, but will it really meet their needs? For example, eReaders and iPads are popular ways to get regular books — but will they be able to get the required textbooks on these devices? Not all textbook publishers have made their catalogs available in electronic form yet. Yes, that laptop looks good, but does it come with all the software the student will need? Check before purchasing.

Protect your investment

"Electronics can get pricey," says Breneman. "And portable devices are more likely to get damaged. So more and more parents are taking advantage of service and replacement plans that come with coverage for accidental damage from handling to make sure they're covered for unexpected repair costs." Most service plans offer support outside of normal business hours, including tech support and troubleshooting, which can be a boon to busy parents and students.

tech gadgets

SMART PENS These devices record everything a student writes when taking notes. Those notes can then be uploaded to a personal computer. They can also record voices as well, allowing students to record a lecture while taking handwritten notes.

GRAPHING CALCULATORS For any student in an advanced math or science course, the investment in a graphing calculator is well worth it. They plot graphs, handle simultaneous equations and can let the user design custom programs.

SMART PHONES From texting and Web browsing for research, to listening to music, taking photos or videos and even calling home once in a while, smart phones can be helpful multi-taskers.

TABLET DEVICE Whether it has an "i" in the name or not, a tablet device can help students take notes, make presentations and do research.

—Family Features.com

How to grill meats, fruits and vegetables

Grilling offers a convenient and heart-healthy way to prepare food, if done right. People tend to think of meat when they think of grilling, but this time of year offers an abundance of seasonal produce loaded with nutrients that tastes wonderful grilled. Items to try include sweet corn, summer squash, tomatoes, bell peppers, eggplant, zucchini, peaches, plums, nectarines, apples, pears and pineapples.

Prepping fruit

Grilling fruits bring out their natural sweetness, and also softens their skins. Harder fruits such as apples and pineapples are easiest to prepare, but don't be afraid to try softer fruits such as peaches and nectarines. Also:

- Pick a fresh firm fruit that's just short of being perfectly ripe.
- Slice the fruit in half (you can keep the peel on) and soak it in water to maximize the amount of liquid inside so it stays moist on the grill.
- If desired, add a little lemon juice to the soaking water to preserve the fruit's color. Feel free to experiment with different spices, like cinnamon or nutmeg. Adding sugar is not necessary.
- Generally, you want to grill fruit over medium heat on a very clean cooking grate (although a higher temperature works best for some items such as cantaloupe).

Like fruits, most vegetables cook better and are less likely to stick if marinated first or brushed lightly with cooking oil. It may help to thread fruit or vegetables on skewers. Given the delicate nature of produce, grilling time may vary, but usually a few minutes will suffice.

Meat safety

For some, a grilled meal always includes meat. To keep it healthy, select smaller, leaner cuts and limit your portions. You also might want to try fish as an alternative to hamburgers. Salmon, trout and herring are high in heart healthy omega-3 fatty acids and hold up well on the grill. Also:

- Marinate, marinate! Research suggests that even briefly marinating meat reduces the formation of cancer-causing chemicals.
- Avoid flames. Grill your food on glowing embers, not high flames. If you have a gas grill, keep it on medium instead of high. When fats and juices drip down onto an open flame, it can cause a flare-up which may deposit unhealthy carcinogens onto your meat.
- Use a meat thermometer. Don't let your beef, pork or lamb burgers cook above 160 degrees F; chicken breasts and hotdogs should stay around 165 degrees F, while steaks are done at 145.
- Finally, flip meat frequently.

DIY marinade

To create your own base, choose an acid-based liquid such as vinegar, citrus juice or tomatoes and add healthy fat (like olive oil). Additional standard seasonings are chopped onion, garlic, salt and pepper. Toss in freshly chopped oregano, parsley, thyme and/or rosemary, depending on what you like. You can also use these herbs in place of salt to keep the sodium count low.

IS IT DONE YET?
USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
(888) 674-6854)
TTY: (800) 256-7072
www.Is ItDoneYet.gov

Sources: The American Heart Association, American Institute for Cancer Research, Center for Disease Control, LifeWork Strategies and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals.

Balancing temperatures in your home

Have a room that is too hot or too cold? Try these remedies.

Nearly every house has problems keeping all rooms evenly warmed or cooled. There are many reasons why various rooms do not stay warm or cool enough even though they have similar sized ducts. One common reason is the number and orientation of windows. South-facing windows can transmit much heat into a room, causing it to overheat during summer. North-facing windows, especially old leaky ones, can make a room chilly during winter. Both problems can be somewhat mitigated by installing new windows or insulating shades, but there will still be some variations.

The walls of the ducts, especially on sheet metal ducts, may be losing or gaining heat as the air makes its way from the furnace or central air conditioner to the rooms. Also, heating ducts are often located under windows. This positions them on cold or hot outside walls and takes space from the wall insulation thickness.

A simple method to check this is to hold a thermometer in the register outlet air flow in each room. If there is a significant difference in the temperature, wrap insulation around as much of the duct as you can reach. Where the duct runs vertically through a wall, there is not much you can do other than open the wall and install insulated ducts.

Suncourt

This register booster fan fits over a register on the floor or wall and plugs into a standard electrical outlet.

Long ducts

Another reason for uneven temperatures is not enough heated or cooled air is getting to problem rooms. As a rough evaluation, hold your hand over room outlet registers to compare air flow rates. If a room is far from the indoor blower, the duct creates more air flow resistance. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that longer ducts lose more heat through their walls. Longer ducts also have more joints that can leak heated or cooled air before it ever gets to the intended room.

Check the damper plates in the ducts near the furnace or air exchanger to be sure the ones leading to the problem rooms are not partially closed and blocking air flow. Try partially closing the dampers leading to the other rooms. This may force more heated or cooled air to the problem rooms. The settings of the duct dampers to each room will likely have to be changed from summer to winter because the heat gain or loss will vary.

Hang a thread from a stick and hold it near all the joints in the ducts to locate air leaks. Seal these leaks with tape or duct joint sealing compound. Don't just use cheap gray duct tape. It often comes loose in a year or two. Use either aluminum foil duct tape or black Gorilla duct tape. Gorilla tape is easier to apply and holds up for many years.

Don't forget to make sure the room register baffles are fully opened. Installing a deflector over the register can help direct heated or cooled air out into the room. This is particularly true with air-conditioning because cool air tends to hang near the floor. Move furniture so it is not blocking the air flow.

Installing a duct booster fan can help get more air flow to problem rooms. Duct booster fans are designed to fit into the ducts (round or rectangular) near the central blower. Some sense when the blower starts and come on automatically. Others have their own thermostat or can be connected to the main blower controls.

Register booster fans, which mount over the outlet register in a room, can also help. They are easier to install than a duct booster fan and provide more control over the room temperature. The register booster fan plugs into a standard wall electric outlet. It has its own thermostat so it comes on only when the main blower is running. The small fan motor uses only about 30 watts.

James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Resources

The following companies offer booster fans:

Aero-Flo Industries, (219) 393-3555
www.aero-flo.com

Field Controls, (252) 522-3031
www.fieldcontrols.com

Suncourt Manufacturing, (800) 999-3267
www.suncourt.com

and register deflectors:
American Metal Products, (800) 423-4270
www.americanmetalproducts.com

Deflecto Corporation, (800) 428-4328
www.deflecto.com

Have a question for Jim?
Send inquiries to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

Getting the most out of portable generators

By Scott Gates

Portable generators can keep the convenience of electricity flowing during a power outage. For those who rely on home life-support systems, these devices become an absolute necessity.

The amount of electricity available is directly dependent on fuel readily at hand. For this reason, efficient use of portable generators is important in keeping temporary power flowing in your residence during an outage.

Proper size

The first and most important step toward efficiency starts with size. The larger the generator, the more fuel it requires to operate, regardless of load.

To determine the size you'll need, make a list of appliances you want to run in the event of an outage. Find both starting and running wattage requirements on appliance nameplates or in owner's manuals; then add them up to determine the total wattage. Although the starting wattage will last for only a few seconds, the generator must be able to meet it to run safely. Once you have a total, scale the generator up a size or two to ensure safe, efficient operation.

Comparing fuels

All generators operate by converting mechanical energy, produced by fuel combustion, to a DC current (or an alternating, or AC, current in some cases). Generators typically use one of four fuel types: gasoline, diesel, propane or natural gas.

Gasoline remains the most common fuel source for residential portable generators. However, gasoline is highly flammable, has a short shelf life, and doesn't burn as efficiently as diesel.

For loads larger than 30 kilowatts, diesel is a less expensive option. Diesel is the least flammable and generally can be obtained in an emergency because of its military, trucking and farming uses. Diesel also has a longer shelf life than gasoline, although diesel engine noise can be louder compared to gasoline, with the engines subject to smoke if not properly maintained. A typical 20-kw diesel generator can run a large home.

Propane boasts a long shelf life, is clean burning, obtainable during power outages, produces quieter engine noise, and is more emissions compliant. Disadvantages include more complicated fuel systems with larger tanks—propane-fired generators are usually less expensive to buy and to operate, but they don't last as long as diesel or gasoline models.

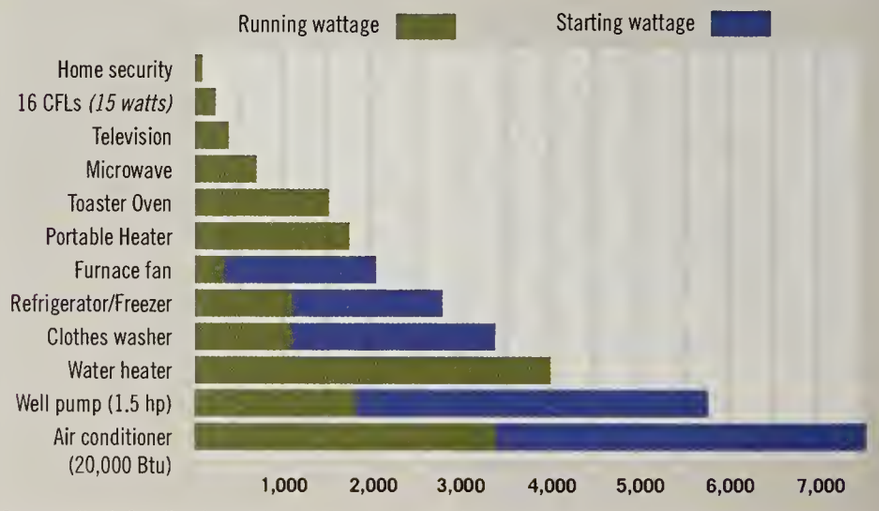
Clean-burning natural gas can be supplied through a larger distribution system, making it virtually limitless for supplemental generation. However, natural gas-burning generators deliver lower power outputs (Btu per unit) than gasoline engines, have higher installation costs, require three times the fuel compared to diesel, and can be dangerous if lines are broken. Also, during natural disasters gas lines are usually the first to be shut off for safety reasons.

Scott Gates wrote this for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The Right **Portable Generator** for the Job

Before purchasing or operating a portable generator, make a list of the appliances you will need to run at the same time. Find both starting and running wattage requirements on appliance nameplates or in owner's manuals; add them up to determine the total wattage your generator should handle.

Sample running wattages, as compared to spiked starting wattages:



Sources: North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives; National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS?

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by August 8 with your name, address and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our September issue, will receive $25.

July winner

The July photo by Michael Gery showed the East Lake Community Center, Hwy. 64 in East Lake, Dare County (Tideland EMC territory). It used to be the East Lake schoolhouse. There were two rooms for all grades. The winning answer, chosen at random from all the correct entries, was from Crystal Basnight of East Lake, a member of Tideland EMC. Ms. Basnight, a community center board member, told us her mother, aunt and uncles attended school here.

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Pampering products

Based in Asheville, Essential Journeys makes bath and body products from with natural ingredients like aloe vera, vitamin E and natural beeswax. The products are a blend of essential oils and fragrances, inspired by founder Kimberly Masters' travels. You can take a trip to the Caribbean with Coasting Coconut Lube for Lips with SPF 15, or journey to London with subtle heirloom garden florals and distinctive English tea soap. The products are not tested on animals and don't contain chemicals such as parabens or petroleum. You can purchase the products at retailers in North Carolina or at the website below. Soap prices start at $8.50; lotion prices start at $4; and lip lube prices start at $3.50.

(828) 350-0395
www.essentialjourneys.com

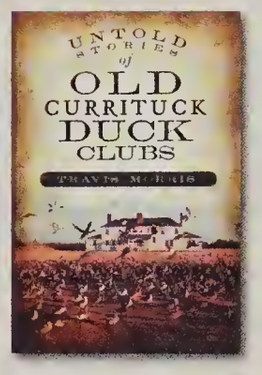
Connected For Life

Chapel Hill-based Family Health Network has a Connected for Life online program to help families stay in touch, monitor and assist older family members. The subscription program ($39.95 per month for a family) also allows families to be connected to their healthcare providers. A test with residents of Fearrington Village in Pittsboro and with the Well Spring Retirement Community in Greensboro found that seniors using the technology enjoyed easy access to their care circle, their church, their community and the world. Connected for Life is designed so older people with little or no computer experience can use it. Besides Internet access, users can participate in e-mail communication and engage in video visits with loved ones and healthcare professionals. Family members and health care professionals can remotely monitor, record and track a senior's health status and medications on a daily basis. Computer equipment is available as well.

(800) 237-0745
www.familyhealthnetwork.com

on the bookshelf

Untold Stories Of Old Currituck Duck Clubs



Local resident Travis Morris delves into the history of the Currituck Sound, Pine Island and Narrows Island private hunting clubs in this fourth volume of stories about duck hunting on the Currituck. These untold stories weave together documents from old files with first-hand interviews and accounts from a variety of sources. Providing more than 100 images, the book's offerings range from stories of the clubs' prestigious members and guests—such as J.P. Morgan and William Vanderbilt—to tales from local guides about some of the old float box rigs. "Untold Stories of Old Currituck Duck Clubs" is published by The History Press in Charleston, S.C. Softcover, 144 pages, $19.99.

(843) 577.5971
www.historypress.net

Animal Adventures In North Carolina

Do you dream of trekking through the mountains beside a llama or petting an armadillo? And did you know that a liger is a cross between a lion and a tiger? In this exotically themed book, author Jennifer Bean Bower of Winston-Salem shares 70 animal attractions in North Carolina. Each entry provides contact information, driving directions, fees, hours of operation and travel tips, accompanied by black and white photographs and descriptions of the attraction's offerings. Readers find that facilities dedicated to animal rescue, rehabilitation and conservation abound, and that these sites offer intriguing exhibits and learning programs. An appendix lists additional opportunities for viewing and interacting with animals in North Carolina, including wildlife refuges, farm tours, nature preserves and working farm vacations. Softcover, 320 pages, $14.95. "Animal Adventures in North Carolina" is published by John F. Blair in Winston-Salem.

(800) 222-9796
www.blairpub.com

The New Southern Garden Cookbook

This timely cookbook celebrates the pleasures of fresh, local seasonal food, and showcases healthful home-cooked meals made possible by the diverse array of fruits and vegetables grown in the South (as well as other regions). Author and cooking instructor Sheri Castle of Chapel Hill organized it by type of vegetable or fruit, going on the premise that the fresh ingredient at hand, not the recipe, is the better starting point. The more than 300 recipes, combined with 24 color images, are a mixture of original and classic, contemporary and traditional, ethnic and down-home food, and are served up with cooking tips and stories. "The New Southern Garden Cookbook: Recipes for Enjoying the Best from Homegrown Gardens, Farmers' Markets, Roadside Stands and CSA Farm Boxes" is published by UNC Press of Chapel Hill. Hardcover, 456 pages, $35.

(800) 848-6224
www.uncpress.unc.edu

The Goodbye Party

This new CD by critically acclaimed songstress Martha Bassett features original Americana/alt-country songs with a mix of electric and acoustic instrumentation and vocal harmonies. Its 12 songs explore longing, anger, lament and love, and include "Masquerade," "Shake," "Holly Golightly," "Wicked Witch" and "Home." Bassett, who lives in Winston-Salem, is a classically trained singer. She is assisted on "The Goodbye Party" by a number of musicians, including Sam Frazier, Ben Singer, Pat Lawrence and Eddie Walker. The CD, recorded by Spot on the Sonic Landscape in Winston-Salem, sells for $15. The MP3 download is $9.99.

www.marthabassett.com

Slow Food

Slow Food is a way of living and eating that links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment. The website Slow Food Asheville.org is part of this worldwide, grassroots movement, and serves western North Carolina and counties nearby. It provides information about Slow Food Asheville programs such as sustainable cooking classes (called FEAST), Heritage Foods Education (preserving food traditions) and Slow Food on Campus (working with students on sustainable food systems). Past events have included screenings of movies such as "The Real Dirt on Farmer John," as well as multiple potlucks, pig roasts, a pizza dinner, a dinner showcasing local and wild mushrooms and a farm tour picnic. Last year, Slow Food Asheville raised more than $3,500 for the NC Organic Bread Flour Project and more than $3,000 for the FEAST program. To find out about Slow Food events in western North Carolina or to learn more about the Slow Food Movement, visit the website below.

www.slowfoodasheville.org

Carolina Country Store features interesting, useful products, services, travel sites, handicrafts, food, books, CDs and DVDs that relate to North Carolina. To submit an item for possible publication, e-mail editor@carolinacountry.com with a description and clear, color pictures. Or you can submit by mail: Country Store, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC, 27616. Those who submit must be able to handle mail orders.

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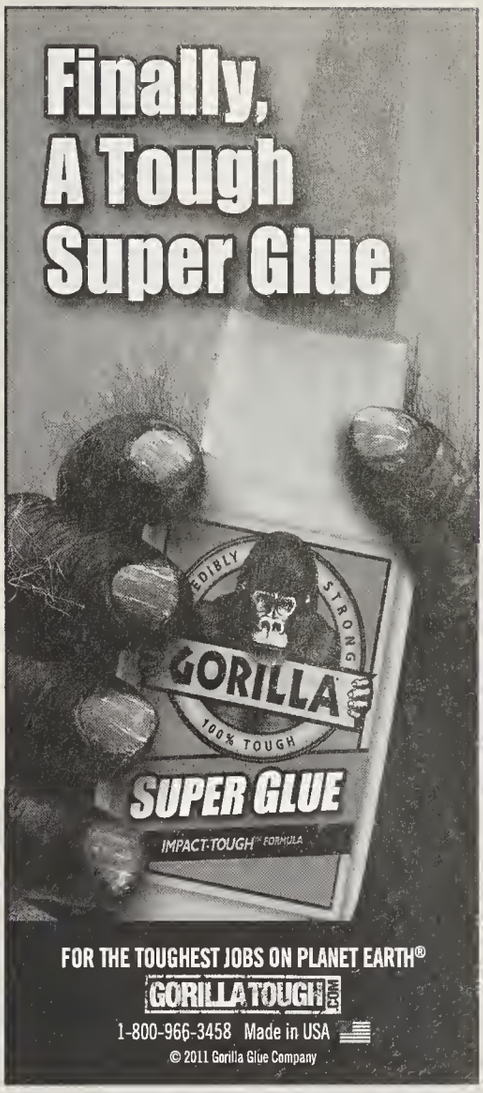

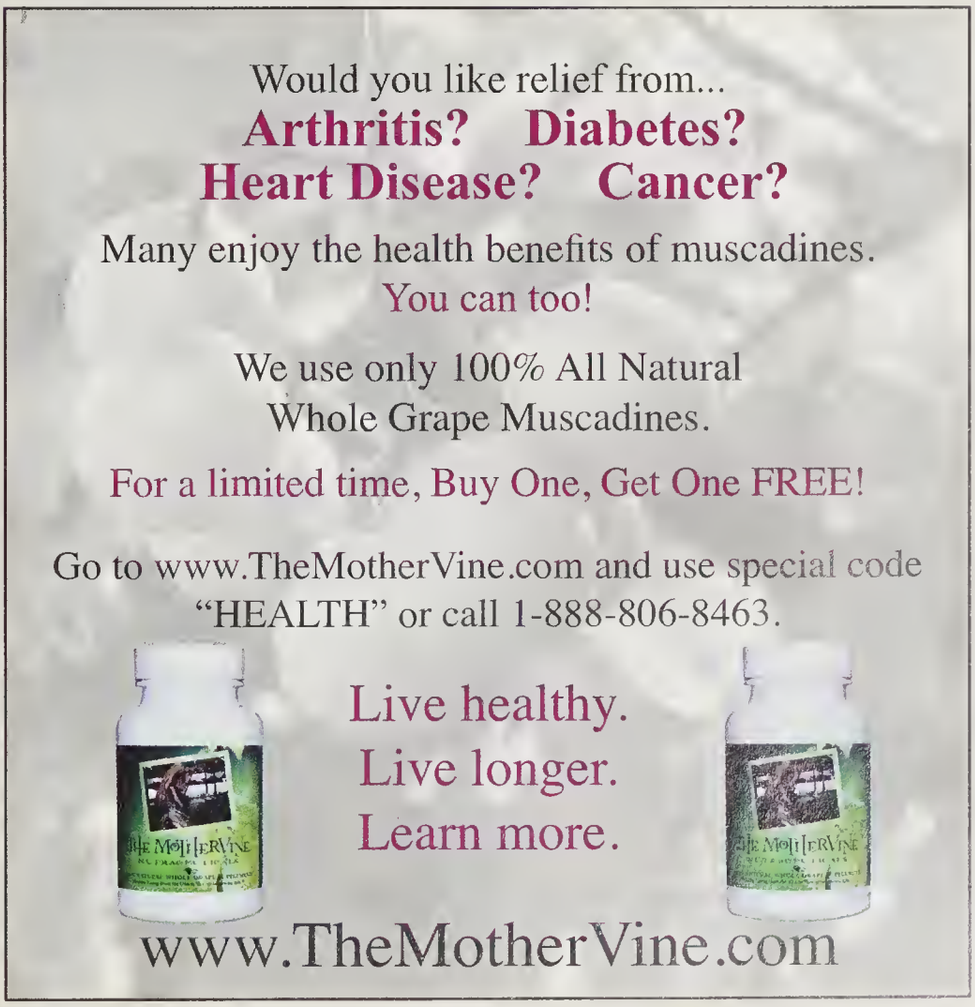
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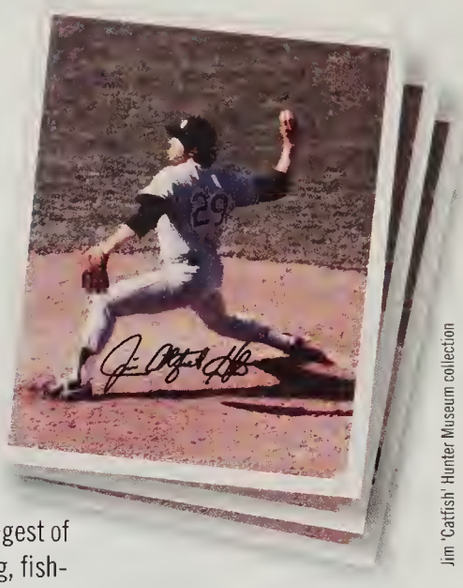
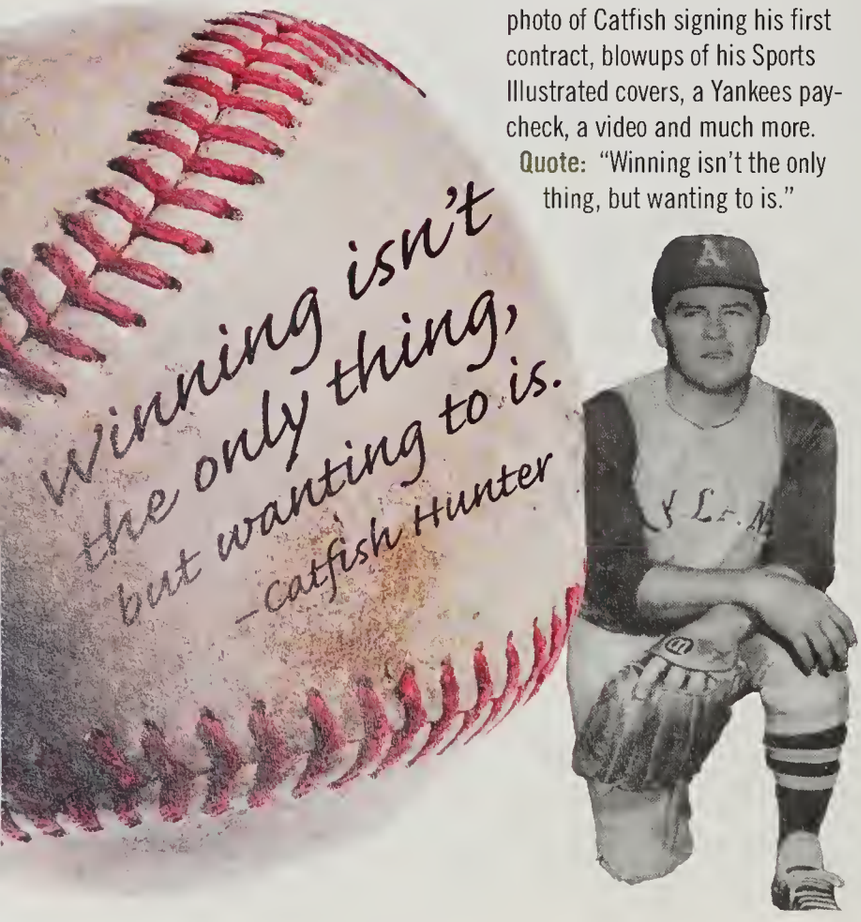
Getting To Know... "Catfish" Hunter

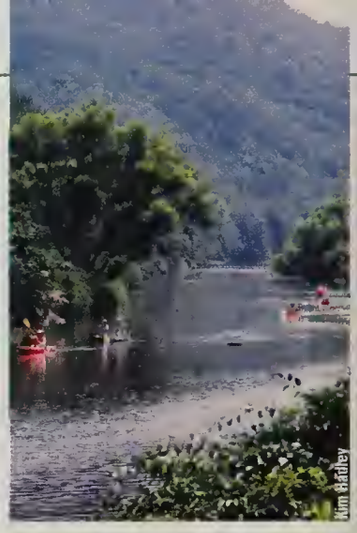


Jim 'Catfish' Hunter Museum collection

Born: James Augustus Hunter in Hertford
Known For: Major League Baseball pitcher with pinpoint control
Accomplishments: "Catfish" Hunter, the youngest of eight kids, enjoyed hunting, fishing and playing baseball with his brothers. While at Perquimans High School, he was a standout in football as well as baseball. His pitching skill began to attract major league baseball scouts, but in his senior year, Hunter was wounded in a hunting accident. The accident left him somewhat hobbled at the time, but the Kansas City Athletics (later the Oakland A's) had faith in the young pitcher and signed him. Hunter began an impressive list of wins and was the highest paid pitcher in baseball when he signed with the New York Yankees in 1975. The Yankees won three straight pennants with Hunter. He was inducted in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1987. The likeable pitcher retired from baseball early at age 33, due to arm strain and diabetes. Hunter was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, also called Lou Gehrig's Disease) in 1998 and died in 1999, at age 53. A museum in his honor is inside the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce in Hertford. Visitors can see a photo of Catfish signing his first contract, blowups of his Sports Illustrated covers, a Yankees paycheck, a video and much more.
Quote: "Winning isn't the only thing, but wanting to is."



Pretty peculiar!



Kim Bartley

The New River, which runs through North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia, flows generally south to north. That's odd, since that course goes against the southwest to northeast topology of the Appalachian Mountains and the west to east flow of most nearby major rivers. Some believe this means that the New River's formation came before its surrounding landscape. The New River (despite its name) is also thought to be among the oldest rivers in the world. In North Carolina, the river passes prettily through Ashe County and is a favorite of canoeists.

NC Division of Tourism

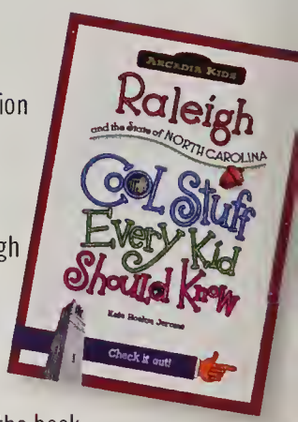
Discounts for teachers

Along with classroom supplies and books, numerous discounts are offered nationwide, ranging from laptops and Photoshop software to cell phone plans and location-specific attractions.

Giftcardgranny.com has a long list that includes discounts at The Container Store, Borders, Barnes & Noble and Pizza Hut. Visit www.giftcardgranny.com/blog/the-complete-list-of-66-teacher-discounts.

tar heel lessons
a guide to NC for teachers and students

Cool stuff to know



What moves, can flash in more than a million color combinations, and is in Raleigh? The answer is the shimmer wall at the Raleigh Convention Center, just one fun fact in a colorful and entertaining book about Raleigh and North Carolina. The new book is part of Arcadia's "Cool Stuff Every Kid Should Know" series, geared to kids ages 7 to 11. Packed with photos and with sections like "Strange But True" and "Dramatic Days," the book highlights Raleigh's landmarks and events as well as what's great about the state. The Raleigh book is written by Kate Boehm Jerome, who also wrote one featuring Charlotte's attractions. Softcover, 48 pages, $9.99. (888) 313-2665 or, to get a 20 percent discount, order online at www.arcadiapublishing.com/arcadiakids.

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63634562

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CHICAGO WELDING

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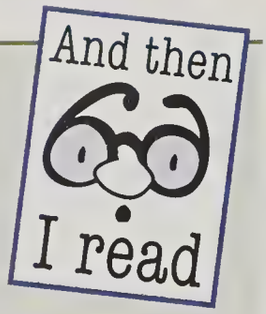

BURLINGTON— Authorities say a man stole a car at the Burlington police station, hit six vehicles as he drove away, and then slammed into a house.

He fired a shot at someone who tried to stop him.

He is charged with six counts of hit-and-run and other charges.

Why not seven counts? Or is the seventh one "on the house"?

Husbands in Succession

She married in succession a monied magnate, a media mogul, a Methodist minister, and a mortician. Asked why she chose them, she replied...

(See page 33)

UNSCRAMBL'T

"ESSE QUAM VIDERI" is the Latin motto which appears on North Carolina's state seal and coat of arms. It means

T _ _ _', _ _ T _ _ _ T _ _ _ T _ _ _ _ _.
d b n s, l u d c s l d c u m d b e s s a.

Use the capital letters in the code key below to fill in the blanks above.

A B E H I M N O R S T means
u n s c r a m b l e d

WORD

ward-wary-pray

PLAY

_ _ I T _ _

_ _ _ R O W _ _ _

_ _ C A P _ _

Each of these words can be changed to spell a new word by adding the same letters in the same order to each end. The added letters are different for each word.

Example: c h U R c h

Domi-No.s

								4	
A	D	R	B	U	N	L	E	C	M

X

4	
C	

4									
C	U	M	B	E	R	L	A	N	D

Letters in this multiplication problem stand for digits. Given C=4, can you find the value of CUMBERLAND County?

Answers are on page 33

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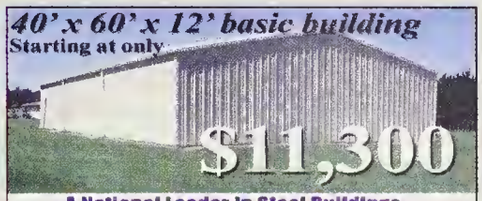

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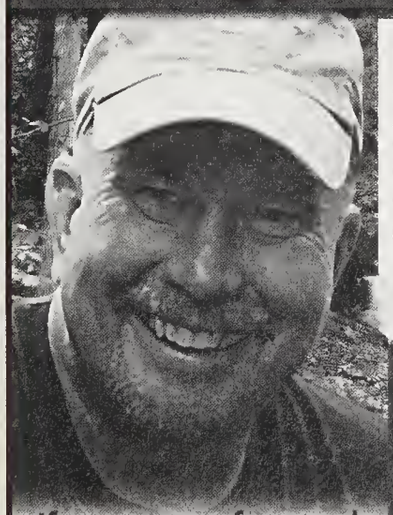
Your Ugly Nail Fungus Can Be Gone!



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By Mary Conroy

How do you like your lawn?

Our clay soil and the heat of our summers make growing and maintaining a grass lawn almost a full-time job. I have concluded it is actually easier to plant natural areas and berms with evergreens. I use grass as my accent rather than the focal point of my yard. Evergreens will create a year-round interest in your garden, and once established they take little water, unlike grass.

If you do want to plant and maintain a grass lawn, here are a few of the grasses that do well in our area.

Centipede is a warm-season grass, which means that it is green in summer and brown or dormant aboveground in winter. Centipede is a sod-forming, creeping grass. The leaf blades are broader and coarser than those of hybrid Bermuda grass or zoysia grass. Centipede forms a loose turf which is not very wear-resistant. Its natural color is yellow-green.

Bermuda grass will grow well in a variety of soil types, including sands, loams, silts and clays. Bermuda grass grows best at high temperatures (85 to 95 degrees F.) and grows very little when the night temperature falls below 60. Therefore, Bermuda grass varieties are most practical in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain. The hybrid varieties, which vary in their winter hardiness, are recommended for soils too sandy to grow good row crops or clover-fescue mixtures. Once established, this grass is difficult to get rid of due to its rhizomes that spread underground.

Tall fescue is good for high-traffic home lawns and shady areas. It is relatively drought-tolerant, but does require additional watering in extreme conditions. Tall fescue will grow in either partial shade or sun. It grows well beneath trees that shed their leaves in winter.

Zoysia grass is the most elegant, fine textured lawn grass grown in the South. In many ways, it is the epitome of what we want and expect in a lawn. It is lush, dark green and forms a dense cover. Zoysia is very resistant to insects and diseases.

Helpful links for grass information:

Tall fescue calendar
www.turffiles.ncsu.edu

American Lawns information
www.american-lawns.com

Plants in flower

Crape Myrtle
Rose-of-Sharon
Peegee Hydrangea
Abelia
Canna
Dahlias
Trumpet Creeper
Cardinal Flower
Phlox
Butterfly Weed
Cleome
Liriope

To do in August

- Strawberries will benefit from a feeding of nitrogen.
- Do *not* fertilize landscape shrubs in August, September, October or November.
- If you expect to do some fall landscape planting, be sure to follow a prepared planting plan.
- Begin constructing a leaf compost bin.
- Continue with your rose spray program.
- Cure Irish potatoes.
- Continue watering favorite landscape plants and your vegetable garden if dry weather persists.
- Spray for Japanese beetles as needed.
- Disbud Japonica camellias where two flower buds exist on the same limb. Remove the bud only if they originate from the same point.
- Spray the following landscape shrubs: arborvitae and juniper (spider mites), azalea and pyracantha (lace bugs), crape myrtle (aphids).
- Peach and nectarine trees need a trunk spray for peach tree borers.
- Spray the following fall vegetables for insects: broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower (worms), and squash (borers).
- Continue weekly sprays on bunch grapes and tree fruits.
- Spray the following shrubs for the following plant diseases: crape myrtle (powdery mildew) and red-tip photinia (leaf spot).
- Control the following woody weeds by spraying them with the recommended herbicide: greenbriar, kudzu, trumpet creeper and wisteria.
- Treat all lawn areas for grubs. Use the recommended insecticides.
- In late August, prepare the lawn areas for seeding if you plan to have a tall fescue lawn.

GO ONLINE

Mary Conroy is a Master Gardener in Forsyth County. Visit her online gardening forum: www.gardeningcarolina.com.

For more gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of www.carolinacountry.com.

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August Events

The Transylvania Heritage Museum in Brevard opens a new exhibit this month on "School Histories Throughout the County," which includes this popular 1861 school scene exhibit. The exhibit remains on view through November. The museum also will figure largely in the annual Transylvania County Founders Day Festival set for Sept. 3. For more information call (828) 884-2347 or visit www.transylvaniaheritage.org

ONGOING

Art After Hours
Second Fridays
Wake Forest
(919) 570-0765
www.sunflowerstudiowf.com

Arts Councils' Fourth Friday
Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.theartscouncil.org

Street Dance
Monday nights
Hendersonville
(828) 693-9708
www.historichendersonville.org

Betty Lynn (Thelma Lou) Appearance at Andy Griffith Museum
Third Friday monthly
Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.visitmayberry.com

Farmer's Market
Saturdays, Wake Forest
(919) 671-9269
www.wakeforestmarket.org

Umbrella Market
Wednesdays, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.uptowngreenville.com

Freedom, Sacrifice, Memory
Civil War photography exhibit
August 1–29, Winston-Salem
Forsyth County Public Library
www.nccivilwar150.com

Freedom, Sacrifice, Memory
Civil War photography exhibit
August 1–29, Lumberton
Robeson County Public Library
www.nccivilwar150.com

"Flags Over Hatteras"
Civil War exhibits
Through July 31, 2012, Hatteras
(252) 986-2995
www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com

Creative writing workshop
Aug. 2–16, Swansboro
(910) 478-6558
www.igniteartschool.com

"The Lost Colony"
Mon–Sat evenings through Aug. 20
Manteo
(252) 473-3414
www.thelostcolony.org

"Othello"
Shakespeare play
Aug. 4–21, New Bern
(252) 639-3500
www.csfest.net

Music at the Mills
Bluegrass and more
Aug. 5–26, Union Mills
(828) 287-6113
www.unionmillslearningcenter.org

Yadkin River Wine Trail Mini Festival
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Different vineyards monthly
(336) 677-1700
www.yadkinriverwinetrail.com

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Tuesday nights
Midway
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www.liveatclydes.com

Sunflower Studio & Gallery
Robbin Richardson, acrylic paintings
Mary Helen Jones, pottery
Through Aug. 6, Wake Forest
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www.sunflowerstudiowf.com

Outdoor Dramas
Through Aug. 13, Snow Camp
(336) 376-6948
www.snowcampdrama.com

"Take Me Out To The Ballgame"
Through Aug. 13, Kings Mountain
(704) 739-1019

Munch On History Lunchtime Lecture
Through Aug. 16, Fayetteville
(910) 486-1330
www.museumofthecapefear.ncdcr.gov

Music On Main Street
Through Aug. 19, Hendersonville
(828) 693-9708
www.historichendersonville.org

Baseball in Cleveland County
Museum exhibit
Through Aug. 20, Kings Mountain
(704) 739-1019
www.kingsmountainmuseum.org

"Fruits of Summer" Exhibit
Through August, Hillsborough
(919) 732-5001
www.hillsboroughgallery.com

Ghost Walking Tours
Through Aug., New Bern
(252) 571-4766

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www.ncmtnchamber.com

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"Fine Art of Wood"
Through Sept. 6, Asheville
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www.ncarboretum.org

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www.hillsboroughgallery.com

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www.mcfma.org

Farmers' Market
Through Nov. 30, Troy
(910) 975-2373
www.mcfma.org

Haywood's Historic Farmers Market
Through Dec. 3, Waynesville
(828) 627-1058
www.waynesvillefarmersmarket.com

Transylvania Tailgate Market
Through Dec. 17, Brevard
(828) 862-3575

"A Journey Thru the 20th Century" Exhibit
Through Dec. 2011, Oxford
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www.granvillemuseumnc.org

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www.museumofthealbemarle.com

1 | MON.

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2 | TUES.

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4 | THURS.

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5 | FRI.

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(336) 249-0383
www.uptownlexington.com

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www.homeofmtmitchell.com/craftsfair2011.html

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6 | SAT.

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www.downtownmebane.com

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7 | SUN.

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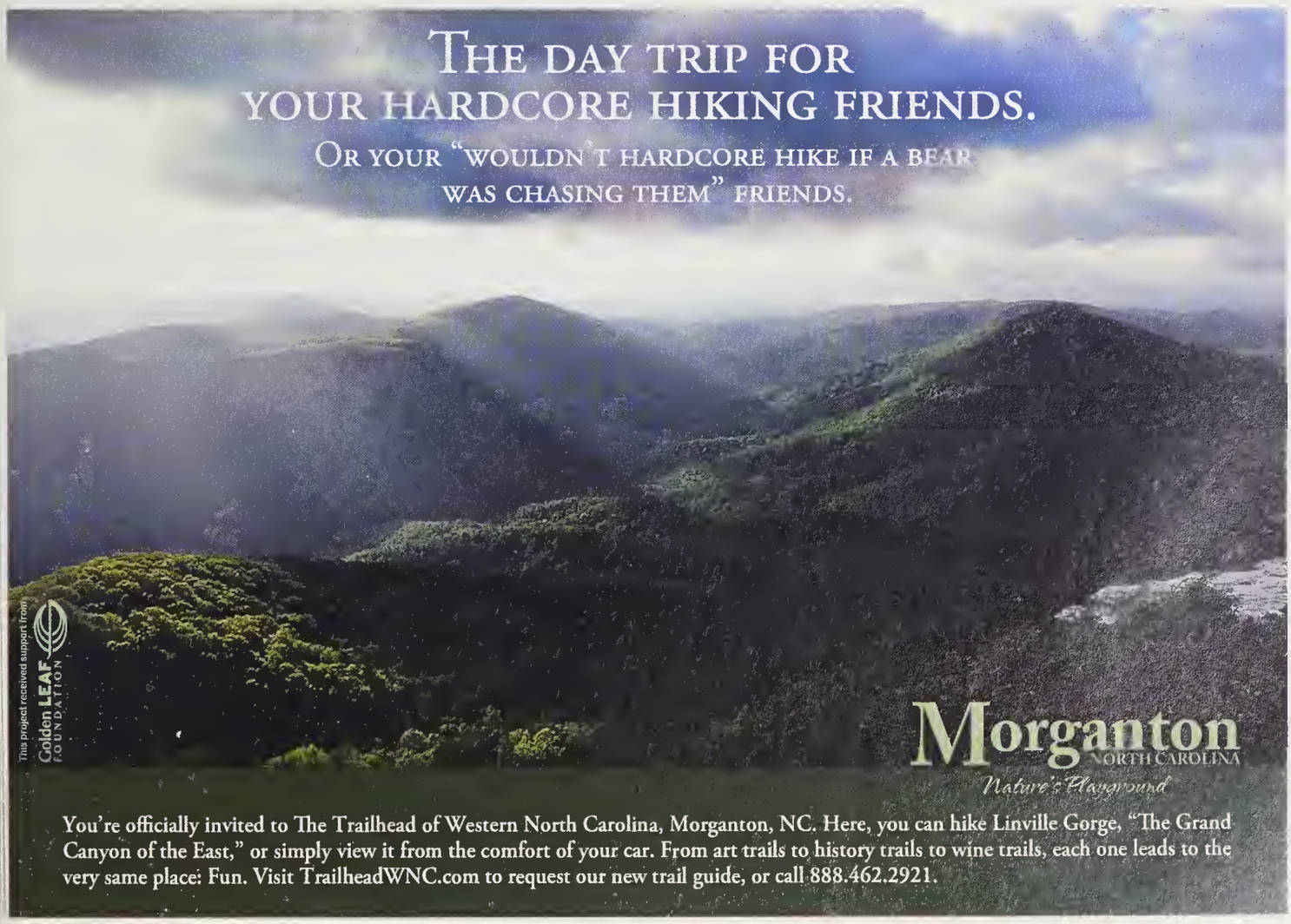
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Check out the granddaddy of all craft fairs in the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area the first weekend in August (5–6) when more than 200 area crafters gather in Burnsville for the 54th Annual Mount Mitchell Craft Fair. To learn more, call (828) 582-7413 or visit www.homeofmtmitchell.com/craftsfair2011.html.

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www.highpointmuseum.org

8 | MON.

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(828) 862-8228
www.transylvaniaheritage.org

Music Inspired Art
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www.igniteartschool.com

9 | TUES.

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12 | FRI.

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(828) 669-2300
www.exploreblackmountain.com

Gallery Crawl
West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

13 | SAT.

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www.battleshipnc.com

Dry Stacked Stonewall Workshop
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www.drystonejoe.com

Adult Pottery Workshop
Swansboro
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Richmond Hill

A restored Yadkin County homestead and grounds recall a lion of the law

Text and photos by Sandra Miller

In the yard of Judge Richmond Mumford Pearson's restored home in northeastern Yadkin County, you can imagine law students from 1848 to 1878 mingling about the grounds discussing the law of the land. Some stayed in Pearson's home and with neighbors, while others lodged in log cabins (now gone) on the premises.

Richmond Hill in disrepair in the 1930s. Local people began the restoration in the 1970s.

Richmond Pearson was born in 1805 in Davie County. He graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1823, studied law with Leonard Henderson in present-day Vance County, and practiced law in Salisbury, then in Mocksville.

In 1832, Pearson married Margaret Williams from Knoxville, Tenn., the daughter of former U.S. Sen. John Williams. They had 10 children, seven of whom preceded their father in death. The couple moved to Yadkin County (then Surry) around 1848. Margaret Pearson died in1855 and was buried in the family cemetery near the law school.

Mary Bynum, from the Morganton area, became Pearson's second wife in 1859. Judge Pearson in 1861 built this stately two-story brick home for her. She remained at Richmond Hill until Pearson's death, 19 years later.

Pearson served as a state Superior Court justice and held court in every existing county in North Carolina. In 1848 he was elected an associate justice of the State Supreme Court and chief justice in 1868. During the Civil War, he made controversial rulings to protect men from being "unjustly conscripted" into the Confederate Army.

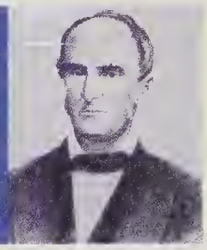
During his 30 years at Richmond Hill, over 1,000 students studied under his tutorage. His students became governors, attorney generals, chief justices and congressmen.

A visit here reveals why it was the perfect setting for his casual and unique method of teaching. The area has been described as a quiet, secluded spot, away from the excitement and noise of the cities, a place where the students would not be distracted from their studies.

Local citizens in the 1970s began restoring the 1861 brick home. Today it is open every third Sunday 2–4 p.m., March through October.

The 30-acre Richmond Hill Nature Park has interpreted nature trails. Richmond Hill Park, located between East Bend and Boonville, is open daily and picnic shelters can be reserved throughout the year by contacting Perry Horn at (336) 699-3921.

Judge Pearson discussed legal issues with students at dinner, on walks in the woods, at the fishing hole by the river, beneath the oaks on summer afternoons.



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14 | SUN.

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15 | MON.

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16 | TUES.

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18 | THURS.

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19 | FRI.

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20 | SAT.

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21 | SUN.

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25 | THURS.

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26 | FRI.

Cruso Quilt Show
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28 | SUN.

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CAROLINA COUNTRY adventures

Day Trip

Topsail Island & Sneads Ferry

Topsail has all the requirements for summer fun. This barrier island has good beaches, aromatic eateries, gift shops, and a great, salty pier. But what really gets some visitors excited is its sea turtles.

Surf City Pier, Topsail Island

May through August, these giant creatures pull ashore to lay their eggs. And each day during the nesting season, volunteers trek along its 26 miles of coastland to identify and protect the giant reptiles' nests. Nighttime beach visitors can be lucky enough to witness the miracle of cute baby Loggerheads hatching and tottering to the sea.

The volunteers work for the **Karen Beasley Sea Turtle & Rehabilitation Center** (the local hospital for sick and injured turtles), and one of only a few such centers in the U.S. The nonprofit center will be moving to larger digs, but currently is located at the southern end of Topsail Island (across from the water tower). It's open to visitors June through August, 2–4 p.m. (except Sundays and Wednesdays). For more, visit www.seaturtlehospital.org.

Topsail was the site of a top secret missile program in the 1940s, and its **Missiles and More Museum**, housed in the blue Assembly Building on Channel Boulevard, is definitely worth browsing. Admission is free and visitors learn about "Operation Bumblebee" and see exhibits on Osprey aircraft, pirates, Native Americans and natural history. A new attraction pays tribute to the Women Airforce Service Pilots of WASP, a special program during World War II. For its hours, visit www.topsailhistoricalsociety.org.

The island hosts three towns—North Topsail Beach, Surf City and Topsail Beach—and is more commonly accessed by the Surf City bridge, an old-fashioned drawbridge that opens at the top of the hour. But you also can reach Topsail Island on a high-rise bridge from **historic Sneads Ferry**. This quaint fishing village dates back to the early 1700s. Its waters have fish-friendly rock formations, and commercial fishing continues there today. This month, Sneads Ferry hosts its shrimp festival Aug. 13–14. Festivities include fireworks, contests, a classic car and bike show, a parade, street dancing and savoring tasty delights from the sea. Visit www.sneadsferryshrimpfestival.com.

—Karen Olson House

Learn of other nearby adventures and events:

(910) 329-4446
www.topsailcoc.com

By Arnie Katz

When should you change filters for your HVAC system?

Q: My husband was very religious about changing the filter for our central air conditioner every month. He always said it would help the system last longer and would also save energy and improve our air quality in the house. He recently passed away, and with my arthritis it's impossible for me to climb up on the ladder to change the filter, which is in the hallway ceiling. I can hire a neighbor's son to do it for me, but my budget is really tight. How much will I really save?

—Beth, Robersonville

There are so many things in our homes that were not designed for those of us who are losing some of our physical capacities. The short answer to your question is that it's highly unlikely that changing your filter every month will save enough to pay for the new filters and to pay someone to change it for you. Most of the research I've seen on this hasn't documented any energy savings from changing the filters monthly.

So what is a person to do? The first thing to understand is that the purpose of the filter on your central cooling and heating system is to protect the coil from dirt and debris—leaves, twigs, gerbils, etc. It was not designed to improve the quality of the air in your house. The coil is where heat is exchanged, and if it gets dirty it moves the heat less efficiently. So having a filter in place is important.

In extreme cases—either because the filter hasn't been changed in a long time, or because a lot of stuff is loading the filter, or you just got three long-haired shedding dogs or there's a construction project next door generating a lot of dust—the dirty filter can slow down the air flow and create enough pressure in the unit to seriously strain the motor and cause premature failure. Sometimes, the filter gets so clogged that it gets sucked into the unit, and air just goes around it, along with the dirt and debris.

The key is to find the balance: change the filter often enough to prevent strain on the motor, but not more often than you need to, since that will be a waste of money. In most houses, changing it every few months will probably be about right. This should be often enough to prevent pressure build-up and damage. But pay attention to the filter. Change it after two months and look at it. If you can't see through it, you need to change it more often. If it looks almost brand new, you can go longer.

If you want to improve your air quality by using the furnace/AC filter to remove pollens, dust and other particles from the air in your house, you can get filters designed to do this. But it's important to make sure the better filter won't increase the pressure on the motor. One way to think about this is to picture a very dirty filter. There's so much stuff on it, that it becomes much more "efficient" at collecting stuff, and will collect more particles than a "clean" filter. Until it gets so clogged that the pressure builds up and it slows down the air flow and strains the motor.

If you can't see through it, you need to change it more often. If it looks almost brand new, you can go longer.

Similarly, a "high efficiency" filter will collect more stuff, but it may reduce the air flow and put strain on the motor. It's important to get a qualified technician to certify that the more efficient filter won't hurt your equipment.

Virtually every website you go to recommends changing the filter often and claims that will lead to energy savings. Unfortunately, there's no research to back that up. It's possible that your husband developed the monthly schedule based on his experience in your home over the years, and that changing the filter monthly is really needed. It's also possible that he was simply following the advice from sources that seemed credible. Now it's up to you to learn what makes the most sense in your house.

Arnie Katz is the director of training and senior building science consultant at Advanced Energy in Raleigh (www.advancedenergy.org). Send your home energy questions to editor@carolinacountry.com

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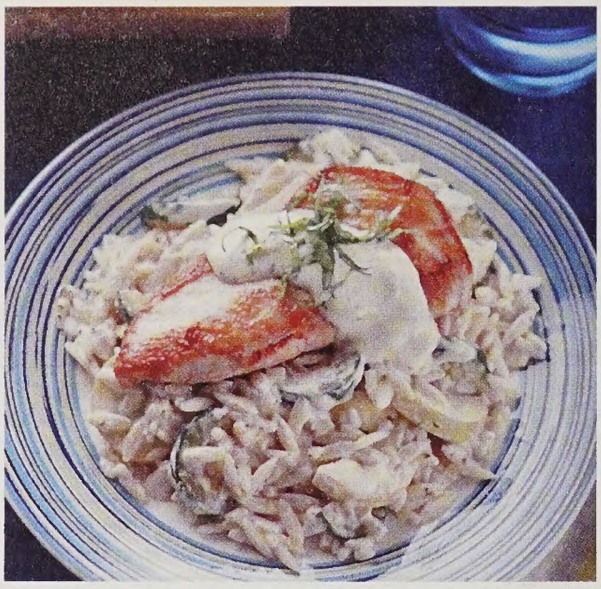


Chicken & Summer Squash Skillet

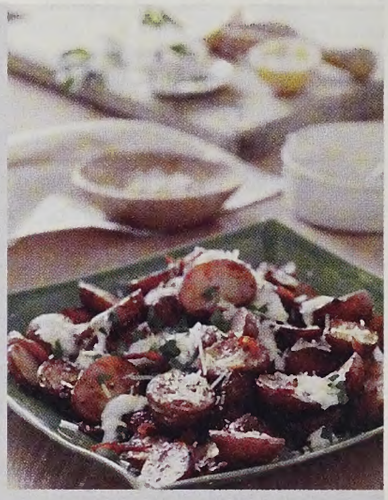
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 4 small boneless skinless chicken breast halves (about 1 pound)
- 1 tub (10 ounces) Philadelphia Italian Cheese and Herb Cooking Crème, divided
- 2 zucchini, cut lengthwise in half, then sliced
- 2 yellow squash, cut lengthwise in half, then sliced
- 2 cups cooked orzo pasta
- 2 tablespoon thinly sliced fresh basil

Melt butter in large skillet on medium heat. Add chicken; cook 4 to 5 minutes on each side or until done (165 degrees F). Transfer to plate; cover to keep warm.

Place ¼ cup cooking crème in small microwaveable bowl; set aside. Add vegetables to skillet; cook 5 minutes or until crisp-tender; stirring frequently. Stir in remaining cooking crème; cook and stir 2 minutes. Add orzo; cook and stir 2 minutes or until heated through.

Spoon orzo mixture onto 4 plates; top with chicken. Microwave reserved cooking crème on high 15 to 20 seconds or until heated through. Spoon over chicken; top with basil.

Roasted New Potatoes



- 2 pounds new potatoes, halved lengthwise
- 6 slices Oscar Meyer bacon, chopped
- 3 tablespoons Kraft Zesty Italian Dressing
- ⅓ cup Kraft Mayo with Olive Oil Reduced Fat Mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons Kraft Shredded Parmesan Cheese
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh parsley

Heat oven to 400 degrees F. Combine potatoes, bacon and dressing; spread onto bottom of 15-by-10-by-1-inch pan. Bake 45 minutes or until potatoes are tender and crisp around the edges, stirring after 25 minutes.

Meanwhile, mix mayo, lemon juice and garlic. Spoon potatoes onto platter; top with mayo mixture, cheese and parsley.

From Your Kitchen

Zucchini Au Gratin

- 2 tablespoons olive or corn oil
- 3–4 tender zucchini washed, peeled and cut into thin rounds
- 8 ounces mozzarella, cut into small cubes
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- Dash of salt
- 1 sprig of fresh parsley, chopped
- ½ cup bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- Chopped onions, optional

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Pour oil into 8-inch baking dish and add ⅓ of zucchini, mozzarella cubes, parmesan cheese, salt to taste and parsley. Make layers in this manner until all ingredients are used. Cover with bread crumbs and dot with butter or margarine.

Bake uncovered at 350 degrees F. until golden brown, about 45 to 50 minutes.

Margaret Kutniewski of Iron Station, a member of Rutherford EMC, will receive $25 for submitting this recipe.

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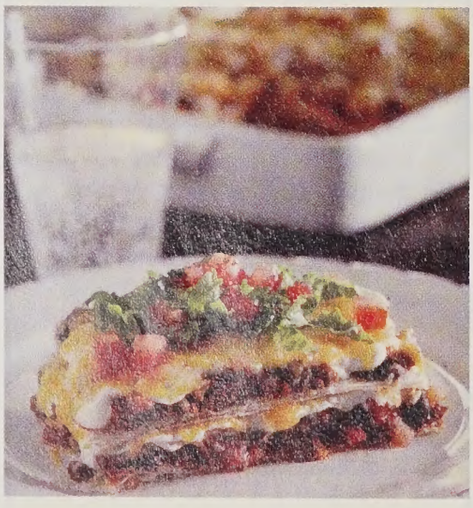

Layered Enchilada Bake

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cups Taco Bell Home Originals Thick'N Chunky Salsa
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, drained, rinsed
- ¼ cup Kraft Zesty Italian Dressing
- 2 tablespoons Taco Bell Home Originals Taco Seasoning Mix
- 6 flour tortillas (8-inch)
- 1 cup Breakstone's or Knudsen Sour Cream
- 1 package (8 ounces) Kraft Mexican Style Finely Shredded Four Cheese

Heat oven to 400 degrees F.

Brown meat with onions in large skillet on medium-high heat; drain. Stir in salsa, beans, dressing and seasoning mix.

Arrange 3 tortillas on bottom of 13-by-9-inch baking dish; cover with layers of half each meat mixture, sour cream and cheese. Repeat layers. Cover with foil.

Bake 40 minutes or until casserole is heated through and cheese is melted, removing foil after 30 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting to serve.

Unless otherwise noted, recipes are courtesy of Kraft Foods. For more recipes, visit www.kraftfoods.com.

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